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★ Anura Bandaranaike's Political Long-Jump

★ Let the Muslims Return Home

★ President Wijetunge's Shift to Strident Chauvinism

★ Ethnic Conflict – Fallacies

★ Fairness & Justice Approach to Ethnic Solution

★ Politics of Colonisation

★ Reflections on Tamil Refugees in Switzerland

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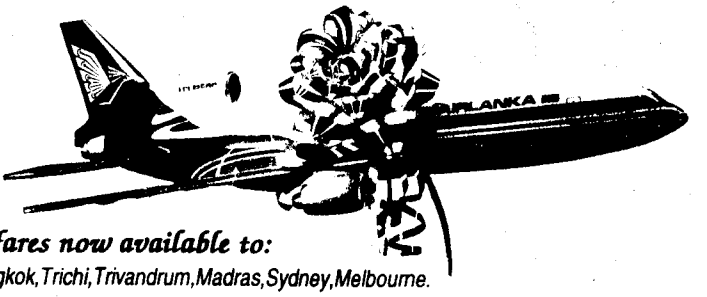

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I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it
– Voltaire

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LET THE MUSLIMS RETURN HOME

It is three years since the entire Muslim population of Jaffna, Mannar and other northern districts of Sri Lanka numbering over 75,000 people were forcibly displaced. For the last three years, the overwhelming majority of these Muslim families have been living in appalling conditions in makeshift refugee camps situated mostly in the Puttalam and Chillaw areas. Humanitarian workers and foreign journalists who visited these camps have commented on the 'pitiable plight' of these unfortunate people. Neither the government nor Muslim political parties have done anything meaningful to rehouse them or alleviate their miserable existence.

In late September 1990, all the Muslim people who had been traditionally residing in the northern areas, especially in the Jaffna and Mannar districts, were forcibly driven out. They were given just two hours notice to leave their homes, assemble at designated places, herded into pickup-trucks, transported and deposited outside the 'frontiers of Eelam'.

All members of each and every Muslim family, including women, children, the old and the infirm, the sick and the poor were victims of this forced evacuation. They did not know why they were being uprooted for they themselves had not done anything that could even remotely be described as provoking the tragedy that had visited them. Nor were they given any reason by those who ordered and carried out this mass forcible displacement of people.

Even by standards of brutality that have characterised the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, one cannot find another previous example of this type of deliberate and premeditated collective cruelty perpetrated upon an entire community of people. A few months ago, the LTTE leader in an interview with a correspondent of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) gave an explanation for the fate that befell the Muslims: 'In the Amparai district, communal riots broke out in 1990 in which a considerable number of Tamils were killed, and following this there was the danger of riots breaking out in Jaffna also. In those circumstances, in the interest of the security of the Muslim people, we requested them to temporarily leave Jaffna. But once the war ends and a peaceful atmosphere prevails, we will permit them to settle again in Jaffna.' This excuse is as unconvincing as it is untenable. What was perpetrated upon the defenceless Muslim civilians was inhuman and immoral in the extreme.

Now after three years, the Organisation for the Rehabilitation of Muslims of the North (ORMON) have recently appealed to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who control most of the northern areas, to allow the Muslims to return to their homes and live in the land of their birth which they regard as their homeland. ORMON is absolutely right when it says that it is the Sri Lankan government that has politically profited from the consequences of what was done to the Muslim population. It has gravely affected the relations between the Tamil and Muslim communities. The government has been able to exploit the division between these communities to its advantage and to the detriment of both the Tamils and the Muslims. Because it was done in the name of the Tamil people by those purporting to act on their behalf, propaganda-wise the government has been able to portray it as an act of 'ethnic cleansing', and thereby undermine the moral platform of the Tamil cause. The case for an autonomous merged Northeast linguistic region was justified on the basis that Tamil and Muslim people who spoke the Tamil language considered this region as their traditional homeland. By driving out the Muslims from the north and carrying out physical attacks upon the Muslims of the east, substantial sections of the Muslim community have been alienated and the case for a merged Northeast region has been seriously weakened.

It is time that the act of enormous inhumanity perpetrated upon the Muslim population in September 1990 and the historic political blunder of monumental proportions committed then are rectified. Rectification can be by way of positively responding to the appeal by ORMON and allowing the displaced Muslim people to return to their homes without delay. These people have suffered enough. They should not be compelled to continue to live in intolerable conditions as they do now. The LTTE has the power and the duty to restore to them their homes from where they were uprooted. It should make a public announcement inviting all the displaced Muslims to return to their homes with an assurance that their safety will be guaranteed.

Anura Bandaranaike's Political Long-Jump

Anura Bandaranaike, once groomed by his mother to become leader of the SLFP if and when she decided to step down, has not only resigned from the party founded by his late father Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. Now he has joined the SLFP's traditional political enemy, the United National Party (UNP), and will become one of its front bench spokesmen as a cabinet minister in President Wijetunge's government. From the front benches in parliament, Anura will be directly facing and confronting his mother, the Leader of the Opposition.

UNP National List MP, Dr. W.I. Fernando has already tendered his resignation. In his place Anura is to be nominated and he is expected to take his oaths as a UNP Nationalist MP on 11 November. He will join the cabinet as Minister of External Resources, Investment and Plan Implementation.

Had he not made this political long-jump, with his mother at his side and laying claim in his capacity as the one and only direct male descendant of his father to whatever is left of the Bandaranaike political legacy, Anura would have been in the frontline of the political battle for power in next year's elections on behalf of the SLFP and against the UNP. On the contrary, the UNP will now for the first time since 1951 be able have a Bandaranaike on its side and will seek to squeeze every ounce of political benefit from the Bandaranaike name. The UNP can also be expected to field Anura as one of its own frontline battle commanders to fight the SLFP in the electoral arena. It is most likely to deploy Anura who, with his inside knowledge of the workings of the SLFP including its factional and family squabbles, will be uniquely placed to politically expose and do battle with his mother's party. Therein lies the political significance of Anura's resignation from the SLFP and joining the ranks of the UNP. Whether one agrees with Anura's politics or not, by whatever political calculation, to put it at its mildest, the step that he has taken represents a loss for the SLFP and a gain for the UNP.

Though Anura's resignation from the SLFP shocked Mrs. Bandaranaike and many others in the party, few believed that he would favourably respond to the shrewdly timed invitation extended to him by the UNP's General Secretary, Mr. Srisena Cooray. When others close to her broached the prospect of Anura joining the UNP, it is said that Mrs. Bandaranaike asserted her belief that no Bandaranaike would ever join the UNP from which the late S.W.R.D. had resigned in 1951 and founded the SLFP. Anura had once before resigned from the party, but had later rejoined it. The expectation was that he would do so again.

There was also talk of Anura giving up politics altogether as he had become fed up with the ongoing squabbles among the family members, particularly with his mother and sister Mrs. Chandrika Kumaranatunga. He also appears to have been extremely hurt by the way he was suspended and the manner in which his supporters within the party were being treated. Sources close to him disclosed that he was considering taking up a post with a transnational company as a consultant. These rumours also helped to discount the prospect of Anura joining the UNP.

Having submitted his resignation from the party on 11 October, Anura left for London and remained virtually incommunicado except that he kept in close touch with some of his closest personal friends in Colombo. During this period, relatives and friends of the Bandaranaike family and Anura loyalists made frantic efforts to persuade Mrs. Bandaranaike to defuse the situation by making conciliatory moves to enable Anura's return to the party. The formula suggested was that Anura should withdraw his resignation and the party leadership would promptly remove his suspension and he be restored to his previous position in the leadership as All Island Organiser of the party.

On her own volition or due to persuasion, Mrs. Bandaranaike did in fact make conciliatory gestures and gave interviews to the media in which she expreessed the wish that Anura should rejoin the party. In a scathing attack on the UNP, she accused it of plotting to create a rift in her party by manipulating the crisis over Anura's resignation. The UNP had invited her son to join it not because they liked him, but because the UNP wanted to destroy both the SLFP and Anura. 'I am warning the members of my party and the people of this country to beware of the UNP's game to split the SLFP and remain in power', Mrs. B. told the press. Reacting to the UNP's invitation to Anura to join it, she said, 'Today the UNP is praising Anura. But you should not forget what the great leader Mao Ze Dong once wisely said: 'If your enemies praised you, then you have to be careful because you are on the wrong path. If your enemies destructively criticise you, then you should be happy as you are on the right path'.

Asked as to why Anura was kept waiting for 89 days without an inquiry or even being issued with a charge sheet following his suspension, Mrs. B. said, 'as a mother I did not want to submit a charge sheet or to take any disciplinary action against my son. Instead I gave him time to settle all his problems amicably. I am sure that any mother would do that to her child. In fact several party members accused me of being biased towards my son. Anura blamed me after he resigned. But he did not know that I was compelled to listen to allegations by party members because I had acted in the way a mother should towards her son.'

If and when Mrs. B. decided to step down as leader of the SLFP, Anura wanted to succeed. With the more ambitious and capable Mrs. Chandrika rejoining the party, there was a faction engaged in promoting her to become leader. Then there were others who wanted Lakshman Jayakody to take over the party leadership. Even Mrs. B.'s three Ratwatte brothers, on whom she depends for advice, are said to back different contenders for the leadership. The infighting in the SLFP leadership in recent times and the eventual resignation of Anura were a manifestation of this struggle for leadership of the party. Immediately upon Anura's resignation, the factions owing allegiance to the different contenders were seen to be engaged in the race for succession. Asked about this race, Mrs. B. said that it was not one or two persons who were expecting to become leader of the party. 'There are those within the family and those outside who are eyeing the post. There are some others who help our family members and in turn expect to be appointed. I know about all of them, and I will never favour them', she said.

Even as Mrs. B. was making conciliatory gestures to enable Anura's return, there were others in influential positions in the SLFP who were alleged to have been engaged in activities which would prevent his return. According to sources inside the party, there was a 'cabal' at the centre which was determined to get rid of him. This cabal included the party's General Secretary, Dharmasiri Senanayake, Nimal Siripala De Silva. S.B. Dissanayake and Anurudha Ratwatte.

According to those who discussed

with Mrs. B. The question of Anura's return to the party, the arrangement was that the SLFP would desist from formally sending the letter informing the Secretary General of Parliament of Anura's resignation. The effect of such a letter being received by the Secretary General would have been that Anura would have ceased to be a Member of Parliament with immediate effect, and the SLFP would have been entitled to nominate another in his place. However, while Anura was still in London, he learnt that the party's General Secretary Dahramasiri Senanayake had on 22 October formally informed the Secretary General of Parliament about Anura's resignation. Apparently this had been done without the prior knowledge of Mrs. B.

Upon his return to Colombo, Anura met President Wijetunge and his joining the UNP was announced. At a press conference, Anura said that his final decision to join the UNP was taken on 24 October after he learned that the SLFP General Secretary had written to the Secretary General of Parliament notifying him of Anura's resignation. 'As far as I am concerned this was the last nail in the coffin. I thought they would do something to compromise, but nothing happened'. He promised that he would never return to the SLFP even if he was offered the SLFP leadership.

It is said that the anti-Anura faction within the SLFP is jubilant over his joining the UNP because they can now rest assured of his not returning to the SLFP. They genuinely believe that the defection of Anura will bring unity and stability within the SLFP. On the other hand there are others who believe that his joining the UNP has dealt a body blow directed at the SLFP from which the party will take a long time to recover.

What of the Anura loyalists who are still within the SLFP? Before his departure from the SLFP, Anura was supposed to have had the loyalty of at least 20 MPs of the SLFP's 65 parliamentarians. There is no doubt that the UNP will bring pressure upon Anura to use his influence to wean them towards the UNP. And to ensure that they would not fall foul of the anti-defection provision in the Constitution, the government may even bring about a move to amend this provision thus facilitating defection of these MPs to the UNP. However there are those while having been loyal to Anura so long as he was in the SLFP and stood by him even after his suspension, who are intensely anti-UNP. The fiery and irrepressible MP for Hambantota, Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse is one such example. Those like Rajapakse will never countenance Anura joining the UNP. A well known Anura loyalist, the Trincomalee SLFP MP Mr M.K.A.D.S. Gunawardene said, 'I am prepared to go with Anura Bandaranaike even to hell. But I will never join the UNP'.

With Anura joining the UNP, there is no doubt that Chandrika's claim for the mantle of SLFP leadership will be difficult to resist. The full weight of her mother's support will be there to promote her. But there are those within the party who want to rid the party of the Bandaranaikes who they believe have used the party as if it is one of their inherited aristocratic fiefdoms. They might join forces in what some describe as a coalition of convenience with the Anura loyalists who are still within the party to elect a non-Bandaranaike as the leader of the SLFP.

Intensified Indiscriminate Arrest of Tamils in Colombo

Almost every week since the assassination of President Premadasa in May this year, Colombo police announce a new LTTE threat including the arrival of Tiger hit squads, and they declare a security alert to cover the entire city. Since May, over 8,000 Tamils have been taken into custody in Colombo, and arrests following cordon-and search operations have been intensified during the last two months in many areas of the capital. Newspaper reports recount almost daily round-up of Tamils.

Recently the *Sunday Times* reported that police in the city now have a quota system for the arrest of Tamils and that they are targeting wealthy youths at leading schools and prospering businesses as the LTTE threat in the city continues. The police deny that patrols were expected to make a certain number of arrests every day, and assert that the overwhelming majority of those who are taken into custody are released within 24 to 48 hours after investigation relating to their innocence, and that only those with alleged Tiger connections are detained for longer periods.

With the recent intensification in the number of arrests, informed sources say that at least 1000 to 2000 Tamil persons remain in police custody at any given time. In addition to these arrests, approximately 950 Tamils are held in Kalutara and Colombo prisons, many without being charged for over two years. A recent report by the government appointed Human Rights Task Force (HRTF) reveals that the army has detained 2,224 persons, mostly Tamils in the North-east.

Midnight cordon-and-search operations in Colombo and suburbs where Tamils are known to live in large numbers have become common place. Police knock on doors of each house, and take into custody Tamils, men or women, young or old, employed or not, rich or poor, throw them into police vans and take them away for questioning. Those Tamils who have taken up residence in guest houses, boarding house, lodgings also are subjected to similar treatment. Possession of National Identity Cards is no guarantee from being arrested. Relatives and friends find it extremely difficult to locate where those arrested are detained.

Reliable reports also indicate that unidentified armed personnel travelling in unmarked and unnumbered vehicles are abducting Tamil youth in and around Colombo in the same way that security forces carried out abductions during the 1988-89 period of JVP insurgency.

Since the resumption of war between government forces and the Tamil Tigers in June 1990, an estimated 125,000 Tamils have fled from the northeast and taken up temporary residence in Colombo with friends and relatives, in lodgings and in rented accommodation. The primary reason for this large scale movement of the Tamil population is the horror of the ongoing war and the draconian conditions subject to which they are called upon to live under in the Northeast of the island. There are tens of thousands of young Tamils 'hanging around' in Colombo only until they finalise 'arrangements' through agencies to go abroad. The Tamils living in and around Colombo have become targets for the police because they believe that the Tamil population provide a convenient cover for Tiger hit squads to operate with ease without being easily detected.

However, those in the know even within police circles concede that the situation is being used to extort large sums of money for the release of detainees. Even persons known to be innocent are being taken into custody with a view to extorting money for their release.

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NEWS REVIEW

★ Northern Muslims Appeal to Tigers

In a recent appeal addressed to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Organisation for the Rehabilitation of Muslims of the North (ORMON) has stated that it was only the Sri Lankan government that had politically profited by the forcible driving out of the Muslim people from northern Sri Lanka. At least now the LTTE must realise this fact and allow the northern Muslims to return to their homes and live in the land of their birth.

The statement of appeal made by the Secretary of ORMON, Mr. A.C. Iqbal, said: 'It will be three years on 30 October 1993 since the Muslim people were driven out from the north. Words are inadequate to describe the enormous hardships and suffering they experienced during this period. Even today the overwhelming majority of these people are living in refugee camps. Those who live outside cannot really understand the misery they are undergoing in the refugee camps. Only those who live in those camps can truly feel the sheer suffering and agony they are going through.

'It is only the government of Sri Lanka that has politically profited from this situation. Those who lost are the Tamil Tigers who drove away the Muslim people. We hope that they have now realised this truth. Therefore, ORMON requests the LTTE at least now without any more delay allow the northern Muslim people to return and live in the land of their birth. We ask them to consider for a moment as to how the deprivation of the basic civic rights of one minority community by another minority community can be regarded as just.

'37 Muslim young men who were taken into custody and detained since January 1990 by the Tamil Tigers have not yet been released. Those young men had never acted against the aspirations of the Tamil people. Their parents who live as refugees in the south do not know as to why these young men are continuing to be kept in detention. Nothing fruitful has resulted in spite of the fact that the intervention of Amnesty International, International Quaker Peace and Service and the International Committee of the Red Cross has been in regard to the plight of these 37 young men. We appeal to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to extend their hand to rebuild Tamil-Muslim relations by releasing these young men and by allowing the northern Muslim people to return to their homes and live in the land of their birth'.

★ Drastic Cut in Admission to Jaffna University

The University Grants Commission has directed an unprecedented drastic reduction in the admission of students to the Jaffna University for the year 1992-93. Although the Jaffna University authorities had indicated to the UGC that they could admit 1180 students to all their faculties, the UGC decided to allow the admission of only 408 students.

The Senate of the Jaffna University, while expressing deep concern at the UGC's decision, has requested the UGC to reconsider its decision and allow the admission of more students in the context of the adverse conditions prevailing in the north due to the ongoing violence and war.

What has incensed the Jaffna University authorities more is the UGC's action in reducing the number of admissions to one-third of the number asked for while allowing the universities in the south of the island to admit more students than they had requested. For instance, the Medical Faculty of the University of Colombo had asked for admission of 180 students, whereas the UGC has authorised the admission of 185 students. Again, in the case of the medical faculties of the Peradeniya, Jayawardenepura, Kelaniya and Ruhuna Universities, the UGC has authorised the admission of five more students in each case than asked for. On the other hand, in the case of the medical faculty of the Jaffna University, the UGC has authorised the admission of only 60 students of the 200 asked for.

★ Rape Case – Twists and Turns

Controversy and mystery surrounds a rape case in which an 11-year-old girl is alleged to have been raped by a retired high ranking police official.

Attorney-at-Law Weerasena Ranahewa who was appearing free of charge on behalf of the 11-year-old girl, the victim of the alleged rape, withdrew from the case after receiving several death threats. 'At first I didn't take them seriously, but the latest threat was to kidnap my son. I feel that my son's life is in danger and therefore I must withdraw from the case', the lawyer told newspapers adding that he regretted his decision because it would be unfair by the victim, the 11-year-old girl, but he was left with no option. Because of continuing death threats, the lawyer has been compelled to change residence.

A woman lawyer, Srimani Kodikara, who was assisting Mr. Ranahewa, continued to appear on behalf of the victim before the investigating Colombo Magistrate Champa Buddhipala.

In a sudden and unexpected move, the Attorney General withdrew the case filed against the ex-police officer which resulted in a hue and cry by many human rights and women's rights and religious organisations. They alleged that the Attorney General's decision to withdraw the case has denied the little girl her fundamental right to justice. Following a written request by Professor of Law, Savithri Gunasekera, the Bar Association has stepped into the controversy and made representations to the Attorney General regarding the case.

Meanwhile Attorney General, Tilak Marapana, called an extraordinary news conference to defend his department's handling of the case and the decisison to withdraw the case against the ex-police officer. He said that the testimony of the girl and other evidence had been unsatisfactory, and his department could not willingly be a party to prosecuting a person merely to avoid criticism from a prejudiced public. His department acted on credible evidence and not on prejudices, he added.

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka has in the meantime told the Attorney General that the application made by his department to discharge the suspect in the alleged rape case was 'wrong in law', and that the BASL would consider 'appropriate action' to have the discharge reviewed by the Court of Appeal if the AG failed to re-examine the inquiry proceedings with a view to reopening the case against the ex-police officer. The Executive Committee of the BASL also expressed its grave concern with regard to the manner in which the proceedings in the Magistrate's Court came to an end.

In another mysterious twist in the handling of this case, the Colombo Magistrate who heard the case, Champa Buddhipala, has received transfer orders with effect from 1 January 1993 to Galle. The Magistrate described the transfer move as a 'conspiracy'.

Legal circles described the Magistrate's transfer as very uncommon in that a Magistrate normally held office at one station for three years, but Mr. Buddhipala had served in Colombo for only one-and-a-half years.

Though the rape case was withdrawn on the application by the Attor-

ney General, Mr. Buddhipala at that time maintained that there was enough evidence to proceed with his investigations into the case. Reacting to his transfer order, he said, 'There is no choice but to accept the transfer. It is quite evident that there is some conspiracy involved in this. But whatever it is I have to accept the decision taken by the authorities.' But he said that his transfer was unreasonable and it did not even come under the routine transfer scheme.

Declining to comment as to whether the reason for his transfer was linked to his stand on the withdrawal of the rape case, Mr. Buddhipala revealed that he had been receiving threats about a transfer from mid-June this year when the case had first come to light.

★ Airbus Deal Cancelled

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe has disclosed that the Rs.35 billion controversial Airbus deal entered into between Airlanka and European Airbus Industries for the purchase of seven aircraft has been cancelled. The World Bank on whose financial support Sri Lanka depends had previously expressed grave concern at the adverse impact this huge deal would have on the country's economy.

The deal also had attracted severe criticism within the country and parliament as to the procedure followed and the financial irregularities involved. Recently, Dr. Wimal Wickremasinghe, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Environment, refused to answer questions on the Airbus deal asked by opposition MP, Mr. C.V. Gooneratne on the grounds that it was prejudicial to the national interest to answer such questions.

Mr. Gooneratne's questions related to matters including: (a) In the Airbus deal costing $700 million (approximately Rs.34 billion), the two A320 aircraft already purchased at a cost of $90 million (Rs.4.23 billion) each had no coat hangers, piped music or video film screen and other usual facilities due to which one of the airbuses is not used, and hence attempts were being made to lease it out; (b) Airlanka made a down payment of $74.23 million (Rs.3.7 billion); and (c) While Airlanka had contracted to purchase each A320 Airbus for $96 million, today they are available at approximately $60 million.

★ TULF Leaders Murder Case

The sole accused in the case of the murder of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) leaders, A. Amirthalingam and V. Yogeswaran and the attempted murder of M. Sivasithamparam, refused to call evidence or to make a statement from the dock in his defence when asked at the end of the prosection case by the presiding judge to do so. Upon his refusal, his Counsel Mr. U. Thevarajah sought an adjournment of the case to make his closing submission on behalf of the accused which was granted by the judge.

In this case, Vincent William Mariyadas alias Master from Chunnakam in Jaffna and allegedly belonging to the LTTE was indicted by Attorney General with conspiracy to commit the murders of the TULF leaders between the period of June and 17 July 1989 in Colombo.

The substance of the prosecution case was that Mariyadas conspired along with the three gunmen, Rasaiah Aravindhan alias Visu, Peter Alloysius Leon and Kandiah Sivakumaran alias Arivu, who carried out the murders. All three gunmen allegedly belonging to the LTTE were killed during the incident by bodyguards of the TULF leaders.

The gunmen had gained access to the residence of the TULF leaders having duped them (TULF leaders) into believing that they (the gunmen) were emissaries of the LTTE and that they wanted to negotiate to bring about a reconciliation between the TULF and the LTTE leadership. Within a few minutes of the talks beginning, the gunmen shot at the TULF leaders at point-blank range. Mr. Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran died on the spot and M. Sivasithamparam narrowly escaped death but suffered serious injuries. The LTTE, having initially denied any involvement in the murders, subsequently claimed that the TULF leaders were killed because they were 'traitors'.

★ Ragging Prompts Dean's Resignation

Professor Carlo Fonseka, Dean of the Kelaniya Medical Faculty, shocked university teaching staff and students alike with his resignation in protest against the continuing practice of 'ragging of freshers' by senior students. Some months ago, a university student died as a result of ragging.

Expressing 'shock and dismay', the teaching staff wrote to the much respected professor that 'although devastated by the possibility that you may leave us, we salute your decision, as it only could have been made by a man of great moral courage, bound by a sense of duty not only to the university system, but to society in general'.

Since the Dean's resignation, the students wrote to him giving strong assurances that there would be no ragging of any kind in the future; they acknowledged that the culprits protect themselves from the consequences of ragging by terrorising the victims; and they appreciated the consequences of future ragging – that the Deans and Heads of Departments would immediately resign.

The university teachers told the professor that the students' response deserved his sympathetic consideraiton, and that they themselves promised to eradicate ragging completely and undertook to carry out necessary disciplinary action without the slightest hesitation. They said that the professor's resignation would be disastrous 'to this young and vulnerable faculty', and appealed to him to reconsider his decision and withdraw the resignation.

★ Breakup of FUTA

The powerful Federation of University Teachers Association (FUTA) is breaking up. Already the University of Colombo Law Teachers Association (UCLTA), Faculty of Medicines Teachers Association (FMTA), and University of Colombo Science Teachers Association (UCSTA) have broken away from the FUTA in protest against its questionable role in promoting the interests of Dr. Nalin de Silva at the expense of the interests of the university teachers in general.

Dr. Nalin de Silva, the arch exponent of the chauvinist ideology of Jathika Chinthanaya, was dismissed from his post following the findings of a University Tribunal on charges of gross indiscipline. He was engaged in a campaign of 'consistent, vituperative attacks on the University of Colombo and its academics'. In spite of his dismissal and thereby ceasing to be a university teacher, Dr. de Silva was recently re-elected as President of the FUTA.

The member Associations also have condemned the report produced by a sub-committee appointed by FUTA which sought to denigrate the findings of the University Tribunal that held the disciplinary hearing against Dr. de Silva. The FUTA sub-committee report alleged that the Tribunal's findings contained 'distortions, inaccuracies and misrepresentations'. Rejecting the sub-committee's allegations as 'a gross insult to our Faculty', the FMTA stated that it 'is extremely concerned and perturbed about the manner in which individual interests, some of which do not fall within the purview of legitimate trade union activities are being pursued' by FUTA.

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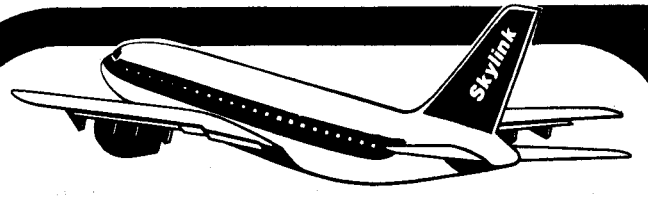

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President Wijetunge's Shift to Strident Sinhala-Buddhist Chauvinism

by our Special Correspondent

In the beginning it was casually assumed by many in Sri Lanka's political and opinion making circles that President D.B. Wijetunge's views on the northeast problem were a mere manifestation of the temporary difficulties he was facing in trying to adjust himself to a role that was unexpectedly and suddenly thrust upon him. Few indeed took him seriously when he first said that there was no ethnic problem in the country but only a terrorist problem. The western diplomatic community which was slightly alarmed thought that better counsel would prevail on him in due course. For there were many with good access to the presidential secretariat who could reasonably be expected to apprise the new incumbent of the 'political etiquette' of adopting an internationally (read western) acceptable rhetoric in addressing the Tamil question.

The politically correct rhetoric which the western missions in Colombo expected of D.B. Wijetunge, was the familiar Premadasa refrain that Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic society and that a political solution should be worked out in order to satisfy the reasonable political aspirations of the minorities. That it was mere rhetoric did not of course matter. There were people like Presidential advisor Bradman Weerakoon, Secretary to the President, K.H. Wijedasa and the able Nihal Rodrigo of the foreign ministry who were in a position to tactfully venture the right suggestions to the new President. There was also an expectation among some Colombo based Tamil parties and groups that the Prime Minister, Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe would set things right soon.

Then there was the Liberal Party leader Dr. Chanaka Amaratunge inducted last month to meet and discuss with them a 'new' basis for restarting the dialogue on devolution and peace. Although some Tamil leaders were evidently displeased and privately annoyed that the Prime Minister, Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe, should have sent the rotund but suave Dr. Chanaka around to find their views instead of calling them direct as had been the practice during the early years of the Premadasa administration, they waited in hope of another round of talks. Wickremasinghe however, did attempt, for his part, to extract a positive interpretation from the President's statement that there was no ethnic problem, in view of the pressing need to compel or persuade the Colombo based Tamil groups and parties to contest local government elections in the east. Needless to say, his interpretation was awkward and clumsy. No amount of sophistry can help one construe the President's stand (that there is no ethnic problem but only a terrorist problem in the island), to convince the western donors and the Tamil community that what he was actually saying was that a political solution should be found for the ethnic problem. The President's men who have to regularly meet with diplomats and western consultants were embarrassed but persisted with their feeble efforts to offer a more charitable explanation to the President's statement. A western diplomat who returned to Colombo recently after a long holiday, on hearing the President's pronouncement noted sarcastically 'I got back two weeks ago and was pleased to discover that there is no ethnic problem in Sri Lanka, only a terrorist problem. How could I have been so blind?

It soon transpired however that there were plenty of people who were ready to unequivocally extend their whole hearted support to the stand taken by the President. The U.N.P.'s parliamentary group met in the second week of September and fully endorsed the statement made by D.B. Wijetunge that there was only a terrorist problem. Several editorials and articles appeared in the state run press which expanded on the theme in earnest, driving home the point that there was no need to concede anything to the Tamils now that the President has confirmed that there was no ethnic problem.

The leader of the Sinhala Arakshya Sanvidhanaya spoke in glowing terms about the wisdom of the President's 'bold' stand. What more could he and his 'Jathika Chintanaya' clique want of a Sinhala leader? In fact this was the very first time that they have got a President who has unequivocally stated what they and their predecessors have been saying from the time of Anagarika Dharmapla. Mr. Gamini Jayasuriya, obviously carried away by enthusiasm at this unexpected windfall, called D.B. the son of a true Sinhala father and mother. It was a very sensitive matter indeed that Mr. Jayasuriya – the leader of the Mahabhodi Society and the S.A.S. – had touched on. The implications of that statement were not lost on the Sinhalese. It sought to indirectly attribute former President Premadasa's 'great betrayal' of the Sinhala nation to his doubtful parentage.

It will be remembered that the shrill litany in the south which all but finished Premadasa's political career arose from the belief that he was sabotaging the Sinhala nation by killing its war heroes Kobbekaduwa and Lalith while soft-pedalling on the Tamil question and dragging his feet on an all out military offensive on the peninsula. In the Sinhala mind this belief was essentially associated with stories about his caste status and birth. Furthermore he was seen as a man from the ethnically 'impure' slums of Colombo. In contrast D.B.'s social credentials are presented as almost impeccable. The leader of the S.A.S. and the Mahabhodi Society is, therefore, asserting that the Sinhala nationalism of the President could be taken as being genuine and effective because he is of good Sinhala stock. In fact the SLFP M.P. for Puttalam, S.D.R. Jayaratne went a step further and said in parliament on 18 August, 'I was told by a person that President Wijetunge is a descendant of Keppitipola'. The memory of Keppitipola Dissawe is, as everyone knows, powerfully inscribed in the annals of militant Sinhala Buddhism as the great hero who courageously rose in bloody rebellion against the British in defence of the faith and the Sinhala nation. Thus every ingredient that is necessary to prepare the heady concoction of strident Sinhala nationalism which seems to animate the pronouncements of the President is being identified with him by the Sinhala enthusiasts who had not so secretly rejoiced at Premadasa's violent end.

As months went by it became increasingly clear that the President's stand on the ethnic question was not merely an ephemeral phenomenon which could be casually attributed to a phase of political adjustment in which a new incumbent gets his bearings right, but one that arose out of his convictions and ideology. A close examination of his regular statements on the problem in the northeast would lucidly reveal that his views are well grounded in a coherent political ideology. It is this that makes him confidently advance his 'thesis' that there is no ethnic problem but only a terrorist problem in Sri Lanka. His Ratnapura speech (28.10.93) smashed to smithereens the fragile hopes of the Colombo based Tamil parties and groups that he would ultimately see reason and at least pay lip service to the frayed

concepts of multi-ethnicity and political solution. Addressing a meeting of public servants working in the Ratnapura district at the Ratnapura Town Hall he said: 'It is very important for the world to know that there is no ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. It is purely a terrorist problem. It is unfortunate that the terrorists belong to one racial group. Many people ask me what package I have to offer to the Tamils. There is no question of a package. We will hold elections at the proper time.'

Again he had told the U.N.P. Balamandlaya meeting at Hanguranketha in Kandy on November 11, 'A certain group is trying to tell the world that there is a racial conflict in this country, but we say there is only terrorism here. We have given everything that they asked for – schools, roads etc., what more are we to give them'. The 'We' in his speeches emphatically refers to the Sinhala Buddhist nation. It also asserts the hierarchy of the majoritarian order. There is absolutely no question of devolution and autonomy. They are totally irrelevant to the scheme of things in this conception of Sinhala Buddhist nationhood. It is a virulently exclusivist conception, characterised by the dominant 'We' defining the political order.

What more do the Tamils want than roads and schools? the question posed by President D.B. Wijetunge resounds in the Sinhala heartland with great cogence, pregnant with those very feelings which many moderates fondly believed had waned in recently years for the better towards a multi-ethnic nation they always dreamed of. The Tamil political parties and groups based in Colombo would seem to have gained the impression that only federalism is anathema to hard line Sinhala opinion, while wittingly or unwittingly overlooking the fact that it is not just federalism but the very concept of devolution itself is considered pernicious. Sinhala sovereignty and the unitary structure of the Sri Lankan state are inextricably interwoven ideas. Devolution in any form is a threat to the unitary structure and therefore to Sinhala sovereignty. In a hard hitting speech at Talatu Oya recently the President stated: 'Provincial Councils are meant to execute policy decisions taken by the central government and not to frame policies of their own. Neither are they expected to sue the government. The Provincial Councils have to put into operation what they are told to do, in order to make it easy for the government to implement its decisions. There is only one government in this country. There are no governments within governments'. It should be said to his credit that D.B. makes no bones about what every other Sinhala leader of Sri Lanka attempted to disguise by dangling the possibility of dialogue before the incurably hopeful Tamil moderates.

It has become almost a dogma with Colombo based Tamil parties and groups that the thirteenth amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution is a solid foundation on which they can ultimately rest their political hope. It guarantees the provincial council system that had given a brief opportunity for regional rule – however precarious – to the Tamils. However those Tamils who permitted themselves to indulge their faith in the thirteenth amendment had preferred to overlook the criticism that had been levelled against the Indo-Lanka Accord which had entailed the amendment. The criticism was this: Although the amendment is an unprecedented constitutional basis for devolution, a unitary system which is essentially predicated on the inviolable sovereignty of the parliament and an executive Presidency could easily debilitate or negate that basis if a Sinhala leader who did not subscribe to the idea of multi-ethnicity became President with a comfortable majority in parliament. Many Tamil leaders naively overlooked or deliberately ignored this criticism because they had deluded themselves that India would constantly be on their side as a guarantee against such an eventuality.

Today they find to their utter consternation that Delhi has no time at all for them and is doing everything possible to cement a strong friendship with the Colombo government. (The Indian High Commission in Colombo recently scrapped a post in its political section that was created after the Accord to exclusively deal with Tamil affairs). Delhi is watching with cool complacency as D.B. boldly states his views about the P.C. system it had established at so great a cost. The E.P.R.L.F. – the most pro-Indian group of them all – was rudely awaken from its 'dogmatic slumbers' by the President's Talatu Oya speech, but they could do precious little but send off a hastily drafted statement taking D.B. to task. No one seemed to care. A western embassy took up the matter briefly with the Prime Minister who had as usual parried the issue.

It has now become quite apparent that the President is expressing views on the ethnic question in accordance with a clearly definable pattern of thinking. There are some political observers who attribute it to his relationship with the founding-father of the Jathika Chintanaya school of Sinhala nationalism, Dr. Gunadasa Amarasekera, who also happens to be D.B.'s dentist. Their view appears to be more or less correct in view of the ideological consistency which underlies the President's pronouncements on the ethnic question.

The ideology of the Jathika Chintanaya was set in the book *Ganaduru Mediyama Dakinemi Arunalu* which Dr. Gunadasa Amarasekera published in 1988. Dr. Nalin de Silva who is a senior lecturer in mathematics in the university of Colombo is his associate and an important exponent of this ideology. (Dr. Nalin is very active in student politics and was recently sacked from the staff accused of fomenting student unrest on the campuses). Both have written regularly in Sinhala dailies – especially the *Divaina* – expounding the ideology of Jathika Chintanaya in relation to various issues which from time to time attract the interest of the Sinhala people. In recent months Dr. Nalin de Silva and his followers have arranged meetings in many parts of the south to propagate their views about revitalising the sense of Sinhala national dignity and placing it on the solid bedrock of an indigenous or homegrown thinking and culture (which is the rough English equivalent of the term Jathika Chintanaya).

They argue that Sri Lanka must have a national culture which should be strong enough (politically) to assimilate other cultures. This national culture, they say, should be based on the way of life that has emerged over two and a half millenia through the fruitful blending of Buddhism and elements of a purely indigenous culture (read Sinhala). The 'natural historical process' had over the years successfully assimilated peoples of various ethnic and religious origins into this culture. Now this process, according to them, was arrested by the British who in order to promote a divide and rule policy, created conditions deliberately to foster a Tamil consciousness in certain parts of the island. Hence, they point out, the historical process of assimilation by which the descendants of Elara and countless other invaders and immigrants became Sinhalised failed to produce, in the twentieth century, a true national culture.

Dr. Nalin de Silva would draw one's attention to the fact that Tamils who settle down in America would become English speaking Americans who identify themselves as such during the course of a generation rather than insist on their ethnic-political identity. Similarly, says he, Tamils in Sri Lanka

should strive towards becoming one with this national culture. (The irony is that he himself belongs to a social group in the south the Dravidian origins of which has been demonstrated by Professor Michael Roberts).

The Jathika Chintanayaites also propagate the belief that the British deliberately depopulated the eastern province by massacring its 'original' Sinhala inhabitants and settling in their stead Tamils who were brought from elsewhere in the nineteenth century. They add that Sinhalese were driven out thus from various parts of the northern province as well. The Tamil homeland, according to them, is a fiction – a product of the British conspiracy against the Sinhala Buddhist nation. These views have naturally led them to insist that the characterisation of the problem in the northeast as an ethnic problem is a deliberate ploy by the enemies of the Sinhala people to further undermine and destroy the historical process of assimilating other racial groups into the Pan-Sinhala culture of the island.

The characterisation of the war as an ethnic conflict, in their opinion, is part of a larger western conspiracy to enfeeble the indigenous cultures and nationalist aspirations of third world countries, because it basically denies what they see as the 2500 year old Sinhala sovereignty in Sri Lanka. It can be said that although many Sinhala leaders have been inspired by such ideas in the past, President D.B. Wijetunge has been the most unequivocal spokesman of the cause that is today represented by the ideology of Jathika Chintanaya. And hence it did not come as a surprise to anyone when Dr. Gunadasa Ameresekera lashed out at the S.L.F.P. in an article written to the *Sunday Divaina* condemning that party in no uncertain terms for outlining a devolution package for the Tamils in its newly prepared policy paper. He also took to task Chandrika Bandaranaike for saying that she was not for a military solution but for one which can ensure an adequate package of devolution to the satisfaction of all communities and under which the northeast could run its own affairs, in answer to a question posed by Kumar Ponnambalam at a recent seminar (J.R. who was also present dodged the issue in his reply). The good doctor pointed out that the SLFP has betrayed the principle which SWRD Bandaranaike stood for. He also chided the party for covering up the fact that 1956 was the culmination of a historical process of the Sinhala national liberation struggle begun by Anagarika Dharmapala. The SLFP he said does not see it as such but falsely presents '56 as the result of a personal decision taken by SWRD. This is nothing but a deracinate, anti-national interpretation, he added.

In saying all this Dr. Amarasekera was clearly attempting to denigrate the Sinhala Buddhist credentials of the SLFP, which has been a traditional source of strength to that party. The ultimate beneficiary of his 'intellectual' labours, of course is President D.B. Wijetunge.

Instead of countering 'terrorism', the recent trends in the south of the island with President Wijetunge at the helm can only serve to reinforce the Tamil nationalist ideology in its most militant form. Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the Tamil Tigers can congratulate himself that he has found a friend in President Wijetunge for advancing the cause of Eelam.

Ethnic Conflict: Fallacies and Responses

by Rev. Paul Caspersz

But for those in the arms industry and in the arms trade for whom violence is livelihood and war is money, there is no one anywhere in our land or in the whole world who does not ardently desire inter-ethnic peace to return to our land.

The arms industry is the most profitable of all industries in the world. There are people who sell arms to both sides and may be there are people who buy arms for both sides. The US and 'great' Western countries do not want China to sell missiles to Saddam Hussein, but fight with one another to be at the top of the queue of deadly arms sellers to other countries of the Middle East and even to Iraq, if they can keep the deals secret.

We have lived together in the past: Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers; Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians. The times when we had trouble in living together can be counted in days; when we lived peacefully together – a poor but happy people in a beautiful land – can be counted in years.

There is no insuperable reason why we cannot do so in the present and continue to live together in the future. When inter-ethnic peace returns to the land, the violence of the recent past will be a bad dream which no one will want to remember. But for inter-ethnic peace to return to our land we have to stop the violent internecine conflict which in some areas has assumed the proportions of a real war.

But there are a number of fallacies that prevent or delay the end of the conflict and hence the return of inter-ethnic peace and justice. It is the purpose of this article to list seven of these fallacies: No attempt has been made to list them in order of importance, because the order varies from person to person, from place to place and from time to time. To each fallacy there will be a response.

Terrorism

Fallacy: What we have in our land is not an ethnic problem but only a terrorist problem. The terrorists in the North should halt their terror tactics and hey presto peace will return to our land.

Response: The fallacy prevents investigation of the causes of what is called the terrorist problem. There is an ancient Latin aphorism which, when translated, reads: the cause of the cause is the cause of the thing caused. The thing caused is in our case a devastating bomb blast or a murderous run on an army camp. The cause is then said to be terrorist activity. But what is the cause of the terrorist activity?

If this cause can be discovered, it will be possible to work diligently for its removal.

Let me first quote from a letter just received from a friend: 'You will remember our late President saying that Prabhakaran was "born" on the day the Jaffna Municipal Library was burnt down. I would add that he was "conceived" when (according to an Indian journalist) he watched helplessly, as a child of four, his favourite uncle being hacked to death by a thug in 1958.' Be that as it may.

Tracking the causes of terrorist activity we are fortunately on firmer ground. The ground was opened for us by Prime Minister J.R. Jayewardene himself, when he read out the Statement of Government Policy in Parliament on August 4, 1977, soon after the UNP had won a stunning victory at the polls.

'My Government accepts the position that there are numerous problems confronting the Tamil-speaking people. The lack of a solution to their

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problems has made the Tamil-speaking people support even a movement for the creation of a separate state. In the interest of national integration and unity, so necessary for the economic development of the whole country, the Government feels such problems should be solved without loss of time and will take all possible steps to remedy their grievances in such fields as:
(1) Education.
(2) Colonization.
(3) Use of Tamil Language.
(4) Employment in the Public and Semi-Public Corporations.'

The cause of the cause of the bomb blast or the armed raid could not have been set out with any greater clarity.

Lest it be argued that this was only Mr. Jayewardene's personal and private opinion, it needs to be known that JR was only repeating nearly verbatim the section on the 'Problems of Tamil-speaking People' written into the UNP manifesto for the 1977 elections.

This manifesto was, we take it, the work of all the stalwarts – then and now – of the party.

Language

Fallacy: The language problem has been solved by the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. So the Tamils have now nothing to grumble about.

Response: First, the statement in Parliament cited above is quite clear that language was only one of four main areas of grievances of the Tamil people.

Second, even the Thirteenth Amendment shilly-shallies about giving Tamil really equal status with Sinhala as one of the two official languages. A much clearer enunciation of the equality of status of both languages is needed to undo the damage done by the biggest act of political short-sightedness in the twentieth century history of our country, namely, the Language Act of 1956.

Third, implementation of the Thirteenth Amendment, even as it stands, lacks moral and political determination. Go to the Railway Stations of Colombo Fort or Kandy and listen to the anouncements on the public address system, or go to the bus stands of big cities and read the destination boards or read many important communications sent out by Government Departments. Or, for that matter, listen to the ball-to-ball commentaries on cricket test matches. Compare with Switzerland where every government notice, even every leaflet that is packed into a tube of toothpaste, is in three languages: German, French and Italian. And we could so easily really be the Switzerland of the East!

Inter-ethnic rejoicing in the South

Fallacy: The Sinhalese and Tamils live peacefully in the South. They even enjoy themselves together at floodlit cricket at Khettarama. Therefore, there is no ethnic problem in the country.

Response: Since Christians and Muslims live peacefully together in Sri Lanka, can it be said that there is no trouble in Bosnia or in East Timor? Revelry in the South is not sufficient to dispel mourning in the North. There was much revelry on the luxury liner until after midnight: yet at 2.20am on April 15, 1912 the proud Titanic sank with a loss of 1513 lives.

Impotence

Fallacy: We can't do anything about it, but have just to wait on the sidelines and see the country going down the Gadarene slope to disaster.

Response: 'Impossible! Never let me hear that foolish word again' (Mirabeau). 'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing'.

Fallacy: Tell the Tamils to give up the demand for a separate state, and all will be well.

Response: The troubles began long before the Vaddukoddai resolution of 1976 which put forward the demand. We should note that even as late as 1970, the Federal Party in its election manifesto stated clearly: 'It is our firm conviction that division of the country in any form would be beneficial neither to the country nor to the Tamil-speaking people. Hence we appeal to the Tamil-speaking people not to lend their support to any political movement that advocates the bifurcation of our country'.

The 1976 turn-around was thus a last-ditch stand, meant, above all, to convince the Sri Lanka Government of the urgency of a just solution. Even today, it is the firm belief of several students of the ethnic question in our country that, if the Tamils are given justice, the demand for a separate state will be increasingly muted and finally disappear into the dusty pages of old history books.

Stop!

Fallacy: It is up to the Tamil civilian people of the North, the East and the South to tell the Tigers, Stop!

Response: The day is past when the Tamil Tigers will sit to talk turkey with Tamil civilians. The only way to stop the Tigers in their tracks is to be fair and just, if not also kind and generous, to the Tamil civilian people. The way to stop Tiger guns is not to stop food and medicines and kerosine to Jaffna. The Tigers get them anyway and live, it is the civilians who do not and die.

The Army

Fallacy: Let's leave it to the Army. They will wipe out the Tigers and we can all live happily ever after.

Response: The first time we heard the phrase, wipe them out, was when President Jayewardene sent Brigadier Weeratunga to Jaffna in July 1979 with the clear mandate, 'eliminate the menace of terrorism in all its forms from the island and more specially from the Jaffna District'. It will soon be fifteen years after this order was first given. It has been repeated many times since, promises have been headlined in the newspapers that war would end by the end of each successive year. But the war, terrorism, landmines, maimings and killings of Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims continued unabated and the Country Beloved bleeds to death.

We have to get our act together and save our country and our people.

Continued from page 5

Many Tamil politicians and human rights organisations have protested against the practice of widespread indiscriminate arrest of Tamils in and around Colombo. The situation is such that even Cabinet Minister, Mr. S. Thondaman, wrote to President Wijetunge seeking his intervention and an urgent meeting with him. Reminding the President that he raised the question of the large scale indiscriminate arrest of Tamils in Colombo at a recent cabinet meeting, Mr. Thondaman in his letter states that the arrests are still continuing.

'I receive several reports daily, even now, about indiscriminate arrests. I am told that a large number of persons are still being arrested and locked up straightaway in the cells in the Pettah Police Station where about 200 persons are locked up in a cell at a time. The size of the cell is about 30 x 15 feet.

'You will appreciate that any person taken into custody should not be treated as a criminal until inquiries are completed and until found guilty should be treated respectably and humanely. In the event there is no sufficient space, arrangements should be made to find a larger place to accommodate such persons arrested on suspicion until inquiries are completed', Mr. Thondaman states

SRI LANKA'S ETHNIC CONFLICT

'Ethnic Fairness and Justice' Approach to Resolution

by Dr. Jayadeva Uyangoda

The following are excerpts from this year's S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike lecture delivered by Dr. Jayadeva Uyangoda, Senior Lecturer Political Science, Colombo University.

Mr. Bandaranaike's place in the history of ethnic relations in the post-colonial Sri Lanka is a controversial theme. The nature of that controversy is too well known to mention here. His appeal to the Sinhalese-Buddhist society, and the translation of some aspects of that appeal into public policy have had a lasting impact on the course of Sri Lanka's economic, political, social and ideological relations. The interpretation and evaluation of this change can even today lead to sharp differences of opinion.

The concept 'Federalism' has been one of the keenly contested notions in Sri Lanka's political debates. Mr. Bandaranaike was convinced, as far back as the 1920s, that Sri Lanka needed a federal set up. Incidentally, the political demand for a federal system came to be formulated in the Tamil society much later, in the early fifties.

Federalism

The Morning Leader, a Colombo newspaper of July 17, 1926 reported Mr. Bandaranaike's federalist speeches as follows:

'The minorities looked with mistrust at one another. It was wrong to think that the differences were not fundamental. A hundred years ago there were no such differences. They did not appear because the Englishmen sat on the heads of the Tamils, the low-country Sinhalese, and the Kandyan Sinhalese. The moment they began to speak of taking the government into their hands, then the differences that were lying dormant smouldered forth.

'If they consider past history, they would see that these communities, the Tamils, the low-country Sinhalese and the Kandyan Sinhalese have lived for over 1,000 years and have not shown any tendency to merge. They preserved their customs, their language and their religion. He would be a very rash man who would pin his faith on the gradual disappearance of these differences.

'In a federal government each Federal Unit had complete powers over themselves. Yet they united and had one or two assemblies to discuss matters affecting the whole country. That was the form of government in the U.S.A. All self-governing dominions like Canada, Australia and South Africa had the same system. Switzerland afforded a better system for Ceylon. It was a small country, but three races lived there, the French, the Germans and the Italians. Yet, Switzerland was a country where the Federal form of Government was very successful.

'In Ceylon, each province should have complete autonomy. There should be one or two assemblies to deal with special revenues of the land. A thousand and one objections could be raised against this system, but when objections were dissipated, some form of Federal Government would be the only solution.'

B-C Pact

My second citation is the document which has entered Sri Lanka's political lore as Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact.; Although Mr. Bandaranaike himself had to retract from the Pact, when challenged by certain forces that Mr. Bandaranaike had lost control of, this document can be seen, in retrospect, as the first serious attempt to democratically redefine post-colonial Sri Lanka's ethnic relations. It was also the first occasion that the legitimacy of Tamil nationalist demands were about to be recognized by the Sri Lankan state. The following are the main points of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact.

(a) The creation of a system of 'Regional Councils'; the Northern province was to form one regional area while the Eastern province was to be divided into two or more regional areas; provisions were to be made to enable two or more regions to amalgamate beyond provincial limits.

(b) Direct election for the Regional Councils.

(c) Regional Councils were to have powers over subjects including agriculture, cooperatives, land and land development, colonisation, education, health, industries and fisheries, housing and social services, electricity, water schemes and roads.

(d) Regional Councils were to have powers to select allottees for land alienation and also to select personnel to be employed in colonisation schemes.

Consociational Democracy

I would now like to interpret these two attempts made by Mr. Bandaranaike, in terms of contemporary political science categories. Mr. Bandaranaike envisaged a consociational solution to the ethnic conflict.

Arendt Lijphart, a Dutch political philosopher, began to use the term 'consociational democracy' in the early 70s to propose a set of steps appropriate for societies which were ethnically divided and facing problems concerning democracy. As Lijphart accurately observed, the central problem of democracy in ethnically divided societies was the phenomenon of majoritarian democracy. Particularly in societies which had parliamentary governments of the Westminster model, majoritarian democracy had meant the rule of ethnic majorities. Lijphart also noted that the ethnic majoritarian democracy had tended to exclude ethnic minorities from the political process. To manage the conflicts that have arisen out of the contradictions of the majoritarian democracy, Lijphart suggested a four-point formula on which the governments could be rearranged. They are:

(a) The creation of a grand ethnic coalition of all ethnic groups. This meant to facilitate coalitions not among political parties, but among ethnic groups with the aim of managing ethnic conflicts.

(b) Powers and the offices of the government should be proportionately shared and distributed among ethnic groups.

(c) Each ethnic group in the coalition should have the power to veto public policy, in order to safeguard its own ethnic interests.

(d) The guarantee of ethnic autonomy in a system of federalism or devolution

Conflict Resolution Models

Lijphart's original idea of consociational democracy has been later revised and expanded by a number of political scientists who were keen to develop conflict resolution models. Eric Nordlinger, for example, provides five conditions for a model of ethnic conflict resolution:

(a) The presence of a stable ethnic coalition.

(b) Proportional representation in the government for each ethnic group.

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(c) 'Mutual veto' available to each ethnic group in the coalition so that it could vote against unfavourable government policy.

(d) Agreement among coalition partners that the government would not directly participate in public debates on controversial matters, in order to 'de-politicize' such controversies.

(e) Commitment of the majority community to a policy of working towards the benefit of minority ethnic groups through compromise and concession on particular issues or on a package of issues.

To understand the consociational approach in its conceptual totality, we need to move towards the margins of political theory. The conflict management approach – which emerged as a branch of social sciences in the 70s is premised on a very important assumption. It is exceedingly difficult, according to conflict management-ists, to resolve conflicts in deeply divided societies where conflicts are often seen as intractable. Should enlightened or pragmatic leaders wait for all favourable conditions to emerge for the final resolution of conflicts? The conflict management perspective answers this question in the negative. It argues for the management of the conflict, instead of waiting for the unrealistic final solution.

Bandaranaike's Perspective

It is now possible for us to view Mr. Bandaranaike's federalist proposals of 1926 and the provisions of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact of 1958 from a new and contemporary perspective. Mr. Bandaranaike was the proto-consociationalist, if I may use the term in its most positive and secular sense. When he proposed federalism in 1926, Sri Lanka's ethnic question was at a rather preliminary phase. Yet, Mr. Bandaranaike was perceptive enough to realize that mutual ethnic mistrust was on the way to becoming a major political question.

The theoretical essence, meanwhile, of a federalist solution is to account for, to accommodate, and to come to grips with deeply felt ethnic cleavages, rather than wishing them away. It intends to share and distribute political power among ethnic groups on the strength of the fact of ethnic divisions. Mr. Bandaranaike's federalist speeches of 1926 were perhaps interventions of mere intellectual nature. It was not all that difficult for a person schooled in the liberal political philosophy to quickly see in those days the merits of the federal model.

The provisions of the Pact of 1958 too had intentions that can easily be called consociational. The agreement posited regional councils as the mode of power-sharing among ethnic groups; it promised to Tamils a limited degree of veto power in the sphere of public policy. However, the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact lacked a crucial premise of a consociationalist project proper: it was not a pact of or for 'a Grand Ethnic Coalition'; it was confined to Mr. Bandaranaike of the Sinhalese society and a section of the Tamil leadership.

Select Committee Difficulties

Sri Lanka's recurrent difficulties in arriving at a consociational-type arrangement are amply represented in the parliamentary Select Committee too. Paradoxically though, these difficulties have become so insurmountable for the Moonesinghe Committee which began its search for a solution at a conjuncture most conducive for a consociational-type intervention. Indeed, the Moonesinghe Committee had in the political backdrop all necessary ingredients for a consociational enterprise. Provincial Councils were in place as constitutionally accepted bodies for devolution; the electoral system had proportionality principle, although it needed democratic reforms; the notion of ethnic proportionality in political office found a general acceptance in society. The issue that taxed most of the energies of the Committee was the question of the unit of devolution. Even this seemingly minor issue could find a highly magnified presence in the negotiations, due, I think, to a crucial reason. There was no political space in the country for a 'Grand Ethnic Coalition.' Sri Lanka's ethnic leaders were not yet ready for a consociational ethnic coalition.

With these difficulties in the backdrop, I would not advocate political pessimism. I want to argue in my talk today for a moral pact that would provide the normative framework for a consociational democratic alternative. At this point, permit me to examine the case for a consociational alternative, from the perspectives of political theory.

Maximalist Approach

There exists a variety of prospective 'solutions' to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict and all of them can be divided into two main categories: solutions emanating from 'maximalist' considerations, solutions suggested from a 'rational choice' perspective.

The maximalist approach is the dominant model of solutions in both Sinhalese and Tamil societies. Maximalist solutions are many. Extreme nationalists of all ethnic formations think and act in terms of maximalist totalities. Arguments for a total military victory over Tamil separatists as a pre-condition for peace are of maximalist nature as is the LTTE's claim that the Tamil people have no option but establishing a separate state. The LTTE's military campaign for separation is a maximalist strategy. Similarly the position now being ardently advocated that 'there is no ethnic question in the North-East, but only a terrorist menace' smacks of outright maximalism. 'No merger-No solution', and 'No merger at any cost' are also maximalist formulations.

In the maximalist mind, there is little or no room for negotiation and reconciliation of conflicts; even when negotiations are initiated, they are merely designs to continue to conduct the war by other means. The paradox, and of course the tragedy as well, of maximalism is that one's enemy is one's foremost ally in reinforcing and protracting the conflict.

Rationalist Approach

The rational choice approach: seeks a negotiated political settlement to the conflict based on a reform package to be included in this category. Negotiated settlement means the working out of a solution which falls much short of any maximalist solution. It envisages compromise among ethnic leaders and communities and a commitment to redress ethnic grievances that have led to the conflict. The basic moral premise in the rational choice approach is that the protraction of the conflict runs counter to the vital interests of all communities in the conflict. Working out of a system in which violence is reduced, political institutions and processes restored and reformed, and conflict controlled or reconciled is the goal of the rational choice approach to conflicts.

It is my considered view that in Sri Lanka we have general conditions to create space for a rational-choice alternative to the ethnic conflict. This space exists irrespective of the fact that the center stage of the political debate is occupied by ethnic maximalists. The main obstacle, however, to a rationally choiced political alternative is the inability and unwillingness of Sinhalese political leaders to arrive at a consensus among themselves on a reform package that can generate confidence among the minorities.

A recurrent lesson of Sri Lanka's past experience – and this includes Mr. Bandaranaike's own attempt of 1958 – is that for any consociational alternative to work, a reform consensus

among Sinhalese political leaders is both a necessity and a pre-requisite. A reform consensus should precede all the other details regarding constitutional provisions, electoral arrangements and sharing of government office.

A New Social Contract

The notion that the authority and legitimacy of the state are defined in an original social contract has found many expressions in Eastern as well as Western political thought. Contract as the basis of the state came to the center of European political thought in the seventeenth century. John Locke presented the most democratic representation of the contractarian theory of social and political association while Emmanuel Kant argued for normative and ethical dimensions of the contract. The essence of the Lockean contractarianism is the limited government organized on the representative principle: and the Lockean contract posits the government as a trusteeship arrangement among equal citizens.

The classical contractarian theory, particularly the one formulated by Locke and Kant has received a new impetus in recent years with some new interpretations. Professor John Rawls of Harvard University, the leading contractarian philosopher of this century, initiated the new discussion on justice-based contract with his seminal work, *A Theory of Justice*, published in 1971.

Modern contractarian formulations are addressed to people who are deeply persuaded on the point that there are standards of justice for judging institutional arrangements in a polity.

The contractarians are also egalitarians for whom an acceptable theory of justice must reveal a sense in which all individuals and communities owe equal consideration. Imagining society as the product of a social contract is the principal philosophical technique for putting rights-based equality to work in the evaluation of basic social and political institutions. The framework of my own contractarian ideas are posited in this tradition.

Let us briefly consider what it should mean by a social contract in today's context. The classical theory said that men and women formed the state after arriving at an agreement among themselves. The conditions of the pre-state society were so chaotic and disorderly that men and women as rational and equal beings decided to end that state of non-state. The 'contract' in this theory is a conceptual imagination, a metaphor to signify the moral bases of the state.'

In the contractarian imagination, the state is a political association the membership of which is obtained by all individuals – we may add, by all ethnic groups too – as moral equals and equally valuable agents. The state should be an association which is both fair and just so that each individual and ethnic group is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty of others. Using John Rawls' notion of the General Conception of Justice, we may argue that 'all social values in the polity-liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect – are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these values is to every one's advantage.'

Redefining State-Ethnic Relations

Borrowing from the above ideas of John Rawls, I will now explicate two reasons for ethnic fairness and justice to constitute the moral bases of a new social contract.

I would at this point like to define briefly what I mean by my formulation, ethnic fairness and justice. In order to manage and resolve Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, it is essential that the terms of association with the Sri Lankan state are re-defined for the ethnic minorities. It means that all ethnic groups in the polity are moral equals and equally valuable. When the ethnic groups join the association of the state through this contract, they do not consider their ethnic identity; to be equals and of equally valuables, they disregard whether they are Sinhalese, Tamils or Muslims.

The communities enter the contract with the privilege of ignorance of their ethnic identity. To use John Rawls' philosophical language with some modification, they become participants to the contract behind a veil of ethnic ignorance. Thus, the privilege of ignorance enables them to choose the principles of ethnic justice/injustice while being in a position to define 'fairness' untainted by ethnic interests or prejudices. And this stage of ignoring ethnic identities to enter into the contract for political association is analogous to the 'State of Nature' in the classical contract theory and to the 'Original Position' in Rawls' theory of justice.

Ethnic Fairness

The second task of the contract is to define 'ethnic justice' from the position of fairness as described above, in ethnically divided societies; notion of justice is often understood and intrepreted in exclusivist ethnic terms. Ethnicized notions of justice makes the political and public policy processes extremely volatile and exceedingly contentious. The task then is to arrive at norms and standards of justice by which (I am using the Rawlsian language): each ethnic group is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and all social goods – liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self respect – are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these goods is to the advantage of the least favoured.

In this perspective of ethnic justice, the insistence is that just institutions and practices could be the object of a unanimous agreement among affected communities. In a grand ethnic coalition of this kind, each contractor is represented as having a veto over any institutional configuration of society unresponsive to its vital interests. This approach to group justice will help us to de-ethnicize the notion of social and political justice.

My plea is that at this stage of the contract, ethnic groups need to formulate just institutions by ignoring their ethnic identities and perhaps by locating each group in the ethnic identity of another. For example a Sinhalese agent to the contract may think as a Tamil or a Muslim, and a Muslim agent as a Tamil and a Sinhalese. If this capacity to claim for oneself the ethnicity of another is achieved by all ethnic groups in their search for just political institutions, I am sure that new and hitherto unknown possibilities for justice and reconciliation can emerge. Once the ethnic justice is defined and just institutions identified, ethnic groups can go back to their respective identities.

As I said earlier, a social contract is not a document that all individuals and groups put their signatures on. It is a liberal philosophical metaphor of imagining the society as a political association of equals. The contractarian approach to politics and society strengthens the moral, ethical and normative bases of conflict management and resolution efforts.

Forthcoming Events at the Bhavan Centre

Dec. 4 & 18 *5.30pm Lecture on* **'Bhavagad Gita'** *by* **Shri Mathoor Krishnamurthi.** *All Welcome.*

Dec. 23 *7.00pm Bhavan's Christmas Celebration – All Welcome. Chief Guest Rev. Michael Roden.*

Politics of Colonisation and the Minorities

by Rajan Hoole

The issue of state-aided colonisation of lands in the north-eastern areas of Sri Lanka has been one of the central factors in the escalation of the ethnic conflict in the island. This issue has been more acute in the east where the composition of the population belonging to the Tamil, Muslim and Sinhalese communities is mixed. 'Colonisation schemes' introduced by successive governments under which lands have been settled by people belonging to the majority Sinhala community are perceived as having resulted in the transformation of the demographic composition of the eastern province to the detriment of the Tamil and Muslim communities.

Beginnings of Dislocation: The Cases of Allai & Kanthalai

Commenting on the disquiet felt by the minorities over colonisation schemes, an irrigation official observed thus: 'I would not like to describe this as a communal problem in the first instance. In all irrigation systems in this country, irrespective of area and the ethnic groups involved, there is a tail end problem. For various reasons those at the tail end, as time goes, tend to receive insufficient water. This results in some localised conflict. I would describe this as a farmer – farmer problem and not as a majority – minority problem. But I would add this. In a particular local situation when one ethnic group wields a greater hold on the levers of power, through MPs, ministers or officials, then politics could enter to the disadvantage of the minorities. It also so happens that in all major schemes (e.g. Mahaveli, Gal Oya, Allai and Kantalai) the minorities are at the tail end.'

A senior Tamil political leader with many years of farming experience in eastern Sri Lanka described the beginnings of dislocation: 'Take a channel feeding a particular village in a scheme, which is tapped through a small channel to feed some encroached plots. If the encroachers wield political, or other, influence, and as encroachments increase, the channel becomes broader and becomes regularised as part of the scheme. To ensure a better supply, the encroachers may even block the channel built to serve the village for which it was designed'.

He went on to describe the fate of the Kantalai scheme of the 1950s: 'The original Tamil village of Kantalai and the Muslim village fell in the middle of the scheme. So there was no room for them to encroach and expand. Sinhalese encroachment was helped in many ways. The introduction of 10,000 acres of sugar cane by the State Sugar Corporation had already placed a strain on the water resources. Traditional farmers down-stream in Thampalakamam and Kinniya suffered in consequence. Corporation employees encroached adjoining lands for rice cultivation. Corporation equipment was used to level some of the lands. Extra water was let into sugar cane fields and allowed to flow out into encroached lands. Given political influence, the extra water at others' expense was not a problem. Profit making was hardly the objective of the Sugar Corporation. Today encroachment is proceeding eastward along the Allai – Kantalai Road in the direction of the Mahaveli river, towards which the land takes, generally, a downward slope.'

He went on to describe some features of the Allai scheme, also of the 1950s, and of the fate of traditional Tamil and Muslim farmers: 'Originally the Allai tank used to feed fields in Mutur Veli and Thoppur. Menkamam, Kanguveli and Peruveli had their own tanks. Menkamam tank was sufficient to feed 300 acres of paddy for two seasons. Peruveli tank was a large one. This was a natural self-contained system, capable of managing its own affairs. The Allai scheme which purported to bring in the benefits of modern engineering science destroyed all features natural and self-contained. The idea behind the scheme was to construct a channel network system based on the Kallar diversion completed under the British administration in 1928, which channelled water from Verugal Aru to Allai tank through Mavil Aru. Since Mahaveli water was available from Verugal Aru, the existing local system was made theoretically redundant. The Allai tank was reduced by lowering the water level to claim 2000 acres of land for the scheme. The Peruveli tank in the upper reaches of Allai was broken up into three small tanks. The land so obtained was alienated in the scheme. Much of the catchment areas of these village tanks, including Allai, became settlements, whence the tanks no longer filled up. In the old villages people lived in small hamlets which expanded with natural increase.

The Allai scheme blocked up the facility for natural expansion of old villages, now trapped between the scheme and settled areas on land sloping down northwards towards Cottiar Bay. Settlers on the Allai scheme were each given 4 acres of paddy land and 3 acres of high land for housing. They can therefore cater for several generations of natural increase. But people in the neighbouring Tamil village of Kiliveddi live as though in a crowded quarter of Trinco town.

'The traditional Tamil and Muslim villages now ceased to be self-contained and became dependent on Mahaveli water channelled and distributed through a centralised administration no longer directly accountable to them. When this system failed to deliver, for reasons inherent to this state of affairs, it is the traditional farmers from the minorities who suffered most.'

Asked if some of the difficulties of traditional farmers could be remedied, he replied, 'If the civil war ends, urgent maintenance work can be done on some of the silted channels. It is now too risky for workmen and engineers to go into these areas. There will for instance be some relief for Mutur which has a feeder from the Left Bank Main Channel of the Allai scheme. But any substantial long term relief would require rehabilitating the Allai tank by getting settlers and encroachers out of the tank bed as well as much of the catchment areas and giving them land elsewhere.

'As for the Kantalai scheme, its settlements have expanded to perhaps double the designed capacity of 20,000 acres, taking into account augmentation from Minneriya tank. If this unplanned expansion is to be catered for without constant friction between colonisers and traditional farmers in which the latter inevitably lose, Kantalai must be further augmented with Mahaveli water from Minneriya and its capacity increased through raising the bund by about six feet'.

The next question is what would be the consequences of doing so? Minneriya gets its water from Amban Ganga (a tributary of the Mahaveli), which in turn receives its water from the Polgolla diversion conveying 2000 cusecs of Mahaveli water. This water is sufficient to irrigate up to about the order of 150,000 acres, of which 70,000 acres of new lands are in System H in the Anuradhapura District, in addition to

old lands. Through the influence of a powerful MP, an unplanned diversion through a channel was made to 10,000 acres in the Huruluwewa scheme, where the tank was failing to fill up. The channel which is now tapped by others, also wanting water, is a subject of dispute. Hence plans to augment Kantalai to feed another 20,000 acres will run into disputes involving minimally the water users in the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts.

Colonisation, as a Tool of Politics

The drift of the course of events, in which the developments above are part, leads to political as well as administrative dislocation, and during war, also military dislocation. Whatever the wishes of the leaders, they lose the ability to mould a coherent government policy taking into account the interests of peace and the interests of the country. What passes for policy is dictated by the actions and ambitions of disparate elements that blend into the broad framework of dominant state ideology. Among these are: Powerful individuals wanting to encourage and patronise Sinhalese settlements in minority areas for reasons of ideological empathy or wanting a solid electoral base; Buddhist monks or politicians with a crusading zeal wanting to plant shrines and capture territory (e.g. Trincomalee – 4 th Mile Post and Uppuveli & Amparai – Digavapi and Pottuvil); Military officers for reasons above or simply wanting a civilian shield (eg. Trinco – Habarana Rd and Maha Oya); and the requirements of increasingly potent multinational agribusiness, for example, in the Polonnaruwa District. A crusading obsession with the East, supported by the myth that the East has plenty of unused land and water into which deprived Sinhalese populations could be pushed, blends into the disorganised drift.

With the build-up of this ideologically guided, but disjointed, state machinery now in place, it becomes powerful to destroy, but too incoherent to build. The use of state power by individual ministers as part of a buccaneering, land grabbing exercise can be disguised as development. The use of state power where the victims are concerned, is something about which they are left in no doubt. Unlike in the Allai and Kantalai schemes, the pretence of benevolence is now lifted.

'Land Grabbing' in Amparai

The Gal Oya Scheme brought a number of Sinhalese settlers mainly into the area which became the Amparai electorate. When the Amparai District was carved out in 1962 the majority of the population was Muslim. Like in Trincomalee, powerful interests had decided that the time for the final putsch had arrived.

The Ceylon Sugar Corporation was started in the early 60s and moved into Hingurana in the Amparai District. The Corporation had wide powers. Initially the area under sugar cane cultivation was small.

This area had a certain migratory pattern during the nineteenth century or even earlier. Towards the interior were scattered Sinhalese or mixed villages which were on the decline. The fall of the Kandyan Kingdom in 1815 and the suppression of the two revolts which followed probably would have influenced this. The coastal area was inhabited by scattered Tamil and Muslim villages, with a substantial Muslim population in the Sammanthurai Division. These two were part of the Kandyan Kingdom which was a plural polity. Sir Pon Arunachalam notes in the Ceylon Census of 1901, 'The decline of population in Chammanthurai is attributed to migration of the inhabitants to villages in the vicinity of the large tanks of Irrakamam and Amparai.' The Amparai Tank and Irrakamam dam were repaired by the Dutch engineer Bunnand under the latter 18th century administration of Van de Graff, and subsequently by the British administration in 1891.

There was thus migration into these areas of Muslims, a smaller number of Tamils, as well as land being granted to Tamil and Muslim Podiars. The land itself consisted mostly of jungle and park countryside (lands once upon a time cultivated and then abandoned). In the current situation, following significant social transformation, and the Paddy Lands Act confining direct benefits of owner cultivation to 50 acres, the status of land holdings became mixed – registered under owner's name, under the name of a proxy, or encroached crown land not registered but whose ownership was locally recognised. Much of this cultivation was in land near the coastal belt, having village tanks, in turn fed by Gal Oya or other rivers.

Among these villages were Kalladichchal, Kondavadduvan, Illukkuchchenai, Norucholai and Neethai. Reasonably confident that the Muslims will be unable to establish legal rights to the land, the state maintained that the lands involved were crown lands and were required for sugar cane cultivation. The ploy was similar to that attributed to the British colonial government in Kandyan lands. Thus depriving occupants of right of ownership, some were issued temporary permits by the River Valleys Development Board to do only 'Manavari' (Rain fed) cultivation for a few years. Other farmers had more dramatic experiences. They harvested the rice, and before they came for the next sowing, Sugar Corporation bull dozers had arrived, flattened the land and broken the bunds. Even protests by those with documents of legal possession were ignored. A senior Muslim representative described this exercise not as land acquisition, but as 'land grabbing'.

Grabbing Muslim Lands

Leaving aside inducements given to Sinhalese to encroach in the East, such treatment of occupants even on encroached lands in the East was unprecedented. The Muslim representative pointed out that if it was a matter of finding land for sugar cane, uncultivated land in the Amparai electorate could have been used, considering that cane required a smaller quantity of water than rice, rather than taking over productive lands used by Muslims. Sinhalese peasants were also similarly treated elsewhere. But that was to find 56,000 acres for sugar multinationals in Moneragala in the 80s.

During the SLFP government of 1970-77, Hector Kobbekaduwa's ministry of lands gazetted its intention of taking over lands in places including Irakkamam, Dhamana (a Sinhalese village), Varipottanchenai, Hingurana and Kondavadduvan, for sugar cane. Mr. Kobbekaduwa then reportedly suggested to a committee that they would now acquire, in effect, the lands in Muslim areas and put off Dhamana for a future date. A Muslim MP felt that the gazette notice was meant only to make the acquisition look impartial. He responded, he said, by telling the late minister that he could take all or leave all, causing him some annoyance. The plan was dropped.

The takeover of lands used by Muslims proceeded in stages from the 1960s over about two decades in the manner described above. Later the Sugar Corporation blocked out these lands into 2½ acre plots and gave them to its employees, nearly all Sinhalese, to grow cane and sell the produce to the corporation. Thus land grabbed from Muslims was effectively privatised in Sinhalese hands, with some strings attached for the time being. The total extent of land taken over in this manner is estimated as being up to 14,000 acres. Some of this land, including around Kondavadduwan, was later declared unsuitable for

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sugar cane and reverted back to rice under the new Sinhalese owners. The extent is estimated at well over 500 acres. But whether in Kantalai or in Amparai, the profitability of sugar cane never seemed to be an issue.

A less publicised fact is the take over of 1000 acres of land in the Muslim village of Irrakamam for the clay requirements of a government tile factory. Now the land is still being used for paddy, not by the Muslim owners, but by officers of the tile factory. Local Muslims say that documentary proof of their ownership has been ignored.

The legal status of lands taken over from Muslims remained a subject of speculation, with the government holding that they were all crown land. One person who pursued the matter was Mr. M.C. Ahamed, former MP for Kalmunai. His land was taken over in the late 70s despite his protests. Getting redress needed patience, a search into documents in the Batticaloa Kacheri more than a century old, and over ten years of legal work. The following is an excerpt of a letter from the Attorney General's office in Colombo, of 3 June 1993, to the Government Agent/Amparai. It concerns Court of Appeal Application No. 49/88: 'By my letter of 24/4/91 with copy to the District Land Officer/Amparai, I have already advised the Chairman, Sri Lanka Sugar Corporation Limited, that Mr. A.C. Ahamed has valid grounds upon which he could assert his title and there is no evidence to substantiate the position that it was originally state land. In the circumstances, my advice was to consider transferring possession of the said land to the said Mr. A.C. Ahamed who has established his ownership. . .'

Mr. Ahamed explained that the land in question was part of 1800 acres of land which was a royal grant shortly after the year 1850 by Queen Victoria, then Queen of Ceylon, to be held jointly by Karuththa (Black) Podi of Kallar (a Tamil) and Ahamed Lebbe Podi, under a Certificate of Quiet (Undisturbed) Possession (CQP). He had purchased 40 acres of this land for rice cultivation from a descendant of Ahamed Lebbe Podi. Mr. Ahamed added with some anger, 'It took a man like me, with education and means, so much time and effort to obtain redress. Imagine the position of a poor Muslim peasant who could barely sign his name'.

In the Name of Buddhism

The rehabilitation of Buddhist shrines, and take over of land for that purpose, became increasingly controversial. The monk who came into occupation of the Chaitiya at Digavapi claimed up to about 600 acres of land (nearly 1 square mile) which was granted. Later attempts to settle Sinhalese on the land were thwarted by Tamil militants.

The state took over about 150 acres of land, at Perya Visalai Kandam, held and cultivated by Muslims of Sammanthurai under a crown land grant. The reason given was that the tank meant for the Digavapi Chaitiya, of which there were no signs now, had once been on that land. E.L. Senanayake, Minister of Lands, brought a special vote to allocate funds for the construction of a tank. Mr. Ashraff, leader of the SLMC filed an injunction. Those affected were promised alternative lands and are said to have asked for a withdrawal of the injunction, against Mr. Ashraff's advice. About 1986 they received lands at the tail end of sugar cane, of little value for cultivation.

As for the 150 acres taken over, there is, according to local sources, a deadlock between Mr. Dayaratne, MP, earlier Minister of Lands, Irrigation and Mahaveli Development (representing Amparai) and the incumbent monk. The former is said to want to settle Sinhalese on the land and the latter, a tank.

During the confusion following the war of June 1990, Lahugala AGA's division, containing a small Sinhalese population of 8000 was carved out of the Pottuvil division. With recent administrative changes and the subject of land alienation coming under the divisional secretariat of Lahugala, Muslims who were the majority in the area will, almost certainly, not in the future be alienated land in the Lahugala division. (The same *fait accompli* confronts Tamils and Muslims in the Trincomalee District, particularly in the thinly populated Gomarankadawela and Morawewa divisions.)

The most ambitious plan so far in the religious genre is, reportedly, to set off several thousands of acres in Pottuvil around Dharampalai junction and Hidayapuram as a site for archaeological excavation. Muslims believe that only Tamil militants are standing in the way of colonisation disguised as archaeological research and sacred areas. About 200 Muslim families were cultivating on the land, which is near Rota Kulam. The Lahugala AGA's division and the Rota Kulam area intersect with a large portion of the Heda Oya basin, designated for a future colonisation scheme involving up to 50,000 acres of cultivation.

Govt's Incoherent Strategy

On the one hand the government has tried every trick in its arsenal to use the vulnerability of Muslims in the Amparai District to expropriate and marginalise them. But its actions on the other hand reflect its utter lack of coherence as well as strategy. Its agencies have been working hard since the mid-80s to bring a permanent rift between the Muslims and Tamils in the East. Tamil militant groups capped by the LTTE's sensational massacres of Muslims went a long way towards helping the government. This was important for the government to legitimise dismembering the North from the East.

But this, the government in its state of disorganisation is unable to do. Events in Trincomalee and Amparai districts have left Muslims and Tamils in no doubt what the demerger would mean. The bitterness felt by the Muslims as the result of attacks by Tamil militants may have been more than counter-balanced by the state's buccaneering over land. The Muslims, orphaned by both the state as well as by the Tamil militancy, are left with a difficult choice. More than thrusting a wedge between Muslims and Tamils in the East, the government may have succeeded in thrusting one between Eastern Muslims and the political leadership of Southern Muslims. For the latter, land is not an issue, and their interests and careers are tied to the 'national' parties. The government has crowned even the LTTE among a substantial segment of the Muslims as defenders of Muslim lands.

Worst of all, the military leadership has repeatedly said that there can be no military solution. It fell to the political leadership to formulate a package and institute measures to give confidence to the minorities. Over one year of paper exchanges and burning of midnight oil, all combinations were discussed. One was a proposal to allow a merged North-East taking over areas colonised by Sinhalese. These happen to be the very areas with the water resources crucial to the economy of the North-East. A Muslim leader described what this would mean: 'Every season we go for cultivation, it would mean civil war over water'. The Parliamentary Select Committee finally concluded its long winded deliberations with a proposal to hold a referendum in the East to decide the fate of the merger. One observer summed up the laborious anti-climax. 'Even when the LTTE had gone far down the road of committing suicide, the Sinhalese polity will not allow them'.

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The Agreement That Remains Unsigned

Free Passage for People

UNHCR Efforts Thwarted

One of the consequences of the ongoing war between government forces and the LTTE has been the denial of the right of the people to freely travel to and from the Jaffna peninsula and the mainland. After months of negotiations initiated by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the following draft agreement was drawn. This tripartite agreement was expected be signed by the Government, LTTE and UNHCR. However, it would seem that the LTTE is unwilling to proceed with concluding the agreement as it continues to question the right of the army to carry out checks on passengers at the southern end of the Sangupiddy – Pooneryn Causeway.

The following is the full text of the tripartite agreement reached between the Sri Lankan Government, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):

TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT BETWEEN

The Government of Sri Lanka, hereinafter referred to as 'the Government'

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, hereinafter referred to as 'the LTTE' and

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees, hereinafter referred to as 'the High Commissioner' or 'UNHCR'.

PREAMBLE

1.01 Considering the wish of the Parties to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population in the continuing conflict by establishing a safe Passage across the Sangupiddi Strait;

1.02 Considering the Government and the LTTE have requested the High Commissioner to monitor the terms of this agreement;

1.03 Given that the participation of the High Commissioner in the establishment and funding of this project is in keeping with the humanitarian and non-political character of the High Commissioner's office and within the objectives of the emergency relief programme in Sri Lanka undertaken by the High Commissioner at the request of the Secretary-General;

04 Given that the Parties to this Agreement have agreed to observe and respect these principles;

It Is Hereby Agreed by The Parties:

2.01 To establish a Safe Passage for civilian traffic to and from the Jaffna peninsula across the Sangupiddi Strait. The Safe Passage will extend from the shore on the northern portion of the Sangupiddi causeway to the southern edge of the Government-controlled territory on Pooneryn Peninsula, as shown on the map attached as Annex 1.

2.02 The Safe Passage will be restricted to civilian personnel only. No passage will be allowed for persons bearing arms.

2.03 The Safe Passage will include reactivation of the Sangupiddi Ferry, which will operate under the aegis of UNHCR. Depending upon capacity requirements, it may comprise more than one ferry vessel and include use of several small fishing boats.

2.04 As further indicated on the attached map, the Government will establish two checkpoints on the shore at the beginning of the southern portion of the causeway and one at the southern border of the territory controlled by it. The UNHCR will, in order to carry out its monitoring role, establish a presence at the following places:

(a) On the shore, at the beginning of the northern portion of the causeway;

(b and c) Adjacent to the two Government checkpoints described above.

2.05 The Safe Passage will operate for a limited number of daylight hours, with the objective of opening it for no less than six hours, five days a week. The operations may, however, upon mutual agreement be extended if this proves practically possible.

2.06 The Safe Passage will be implemented on a phased basis: during Phase 1, Safe Passage will be provided through the corridor to the following:

i. Government officials;

ii. NGO and UN staff;

iii. Civilians in need of medical treatment, together with their escort;

iv. Returning refugees proceeding

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Taxing the Environment

Even if the Sri Lankan state can subdue the minorities militarily and consign them to dry patches of land, that would be far from the end of troubles. All the indiscipline, administrative breakdown and waste in the colonies are bound to cause conflicts among Sinhalese themselves. Water is a finite resource to be used with care and discipline. With rising demand for unplanned uses of water, it seems unlikely that the systems meant to take Mahaveli water further north will ever materialise. Any localised taxing of the environment can only lead to further dislocation. Taking people out of the management of their local resources and replacing it with a centralised system managed by technocrats, bureaucrats and politicians in a manner wrongly termed superior, scientific and rational, contain the seeds of its own collapse.

Many of these schemes are now peopled by transplanted, socially marginalised and impoverished folk dependent on a centralised machinery that is increasingly failing to deliver. Settlements in catchment areas, settlement and encroachment in the tank bed such as in Allai, and deforestation place a strain on the environment and sharply reduce the water available locally. Demand for additional water from elsewhere, such as from the Mahaveli, cannot be met, particularly if it is in conflict with other powerful users. The Padaviya scheme which has had only two seasons of cultivation in the last 4 years or so, is one instance of an endemic problem. The new trend of colonisation in Trincomalee, amounts to placing poor Sinhalese on small patches of unproductive land, to be maintained directly or indirectly at state expense. There is no pretence of development or economic returns of any kind. The run up to the referendum in the east is likely to see more of this.

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to Jaffna peninsula;
v. Individuals proceeding for family reunions;
vi. Vehicles carrying the above categories of people;
vii. Vehicles carrying relief supplies;
viii. Private traders and their vehicles.

2.07 During Phase II, Safe Passage will be provided to all civilians carrying valid documentation.

General Responsibilities of The Government

Having by signature of this agreement approved the establishment of the Safe Passage, the ernment will:

3.01 Arrange for the speedy repair of the northern portion of the Sangupiddi causeway and of the connecting road leading to Jaffna town, through the Government Agent Jaffna.

3.02 Arrange for the speedy repair of the southern portion of the Sangupiddi causeway, through the Government Agent Kilinochchi.

3.03 Facilitate in every way possible the reactivation of the ferry service across the Sangupiddi Strait.

3.04 Permit the ferry or ferries to operate under the aegis of the UNHCR and to fly the UN flag.

3.05 Designate an acceptable route through government controlled territory south of the causeway and, if necessary, repair and/or construct it so that it is suitable for all weather use.

3.06 Provide appropriate shelter, drinking water and latrines for the use of persons waiting at both government checkpoints.

3.07 Permit Safe Passage of all people, vehicles and goods that are allowed through its northern or southern checkpoints through to the other end.

3.08 If the Government considers it necessary, provide transport through the territory controlled by the Government free of charge for persons referred to in paragraph 2.06 above.

3.09 Permit access to the Safe Passage to casual workers who may be required to help load and unload vehicles during inspection. These workers would be escorted into the area by UNHCR and would be paid directly, on a casual basis, by the vehicle operators whom they assist.

3.10 Permit the UNHCR team unhindered access to the selected route for the Safe Passage, including the southern portion of the causeway, during the days on which the corridor is being operated, from at least one hour before it is due to open until at least one hour after it is closed.

3.11 Permit the UNHCR team whenever necessary to stay overnight on the southern portion of the Sangupiddi causeway.

3.12 Permit the UNHCR team to import and store a quantity of diesel fuel and other requirements sufficient for its use, as well as for the operation of the ferry.

3.13 Permit any vehicle allowed into the safe passage a sufficient quantity of fuel for the return journey.

3.14 **Permit through the Safe Passage all goods which are not explicitly banned under the Government Gazette, or banned goods for which a government permit has been granted.** If there are limitations of quantity in this respect, this should be notified to UNHCR in writing. It is understood that the list of banned goods may from time to time be modified in the Gazette.

3.15 Guarantee the safety of UNHCR staff in the course of their monitoring and escort responsibilities under this Agreement.

3.16 Undertake no military activity on the northern or southern portion of the Sangupiddi causeway during the operation of the Safe Passage.

3.17 Notify UNHCR Colombo, in writing at least 72 hours in advance of any planned military activity which might jeopardise the operation of the Safe Passage, or endanger the lives of the UNHCR personnel or of those civilians passing through the passage. In respect of curfews, these should be notified in advance directly to UNHCR Colombo by the JOC.

3.18 Review the effectiveness of Phase I within one month of its implementation and, if there are no reasonable impediments, progress to Phase II within two months of the initiation of Phase I.

Prerogatives of the Government

Bearing in mind the overall humanitarian objective of the Safe Passage, yet recognising the legitimate strategic interests of the Government, it may:

4.01 Request each individual for his/her personal documentation and determine whether he/she is permitted to pass through the Safe Passage, in accordance with this agreement. This right does not include the right to intimidate, interrogate or detain, except as provided for in paragraph 4.04 below. **If the government judges a person ineligible to use the Safe Passage, it must forthwith request the individual to return from whence he/she came, with his/her possessions and his/her vehicle.** UNHCR will be advised of the reasons for such rejections in each case at the time.

4.02 Search all people, vehicles, luggage and shipments to ensure that no banned item is being carried. This right does not extend to similar scrutiny upon their departure from the Safe Passage. One search only would be permitted, at the entry point.

4.03 If a banned item is found, the government may confiscate it and/or declare the individual concerned ineligible for the Safe Passage. When such a decision is taken, a UNHCR Officer will be notified of the reasons at the time.

4.04 If, in the course of a search, a weapon of war is found, the government may arrest the individual concerned, on the grounds that the individual has not honoured the principles of the Safe Passage established by this Agreement. Such an arrest will, however, be immediately notified in writing to UNHCR on the spot. UNHCR will also be notified of the place of detention of the individual arrested and will forward this information to the ICRC.

4.05 Fence both sides of the road through government controlled territory which is selected for the Safe Passage.

General Responsibility of the LTTE

Having by signature of this agreement approved the establishment of the Safe Passage, the LTTE will:

5.01 Permit the UNHCR team unhindered access to the passage, both from the north and from the south.

5.02 Facilitate the UNHCR in its establishment of residential accommodation in Jaffna town, as well as in enhancing its field office in Jaffna.

5.03 Clear the access roads at both the northern and southern ends of the Passage of all landmines and facilitate the work of the GAs Jaffna and Kilinochchi in repairing these roads.

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5.04 Permit the ferry or ferries to operate under the aegis of the UNHCR and to fly the UN flag.

5.05 Ensure, to the best of its ability, that criteria for admission to the Safe Passage are understood and honoured by those people seeking to pass through it.

5.06 Undertake no military activity on the northern or southern portion of the Sangupiddi causeway during the operation of the Safe Passage.

5.07 Notify the UNHCR Jaffna, in writing at least 72 hours in advance, of any planned military activity which might jeopardise the operation of the Safe Passage, or endanger the lives of UNHCR personnel or of those civilians passing through the passage.

5.08 Guarantee the safety of UNHCR staff in the course of their monitoring and escort responsibilities, as well as their travel to and from the Safe Passage.

5.09 Review the effectiveness of Phase I within one month of its implementation and, if there are no reasonable impediments, progress to Phase II within two months of the initiation of Phase I.

Responsibilities of the High Commissioner

Having by signature of this Agreement agreed to monitor the movement of civilian persons and goods through the Safe Passage, UNHCR will:

6.01 Assist in the implementation of this project by making available the services of the High Commissioner's staff.

Be responsible for:

(a) The monitoring of the Government's control and search of all persons, vehicles and goods entering the Government-controlled area;

(b) Escorting in groups, by a predetermined route, all persons passing through the government-controlled territory, extending from the UNHCR presence on the shore at the beginning of the southern portion of the causeway to the UNHCR presence at the southern border of the government-controlled territory, and vice versa.

6.03 Permit the ferry or ferries to operate under the aegis of the UNHCR and to fly the UN flag.

6.04 Establish a small office on the southern portion of Sangupiddi causeway to act as the command and concentrate for its team. This will include a pre-fab to accommodate UNHCR staff members if they have to overnight.

6.05 Establish a facility within the Government-control territory on Pooneryn Peninsula for the purpose of storing fuel and other requirements for its operation as well as for the ferry.

6.06 Strengthen appropriately its field office Jaffna.

6.07 Ensure that the terms and conditions for the passage are clearly posted at each end, at a place where travellers and traders can stop and read them at length.

Other Provisions

7.01 The High Commissioner is not liable to indemnify a third party in respect of any claim, debt, damage demand arising out of the implementation of the Safe Passage and which may be made against the other parties to this agreement.

7.02 The High Commissioner cannot accept liability of compensation for the death, disability or the effects of other hazards which may be suffered by any person using the Safe Passage.

7.03 Nothing contained in this agreement shall be deemed waiver, express or implied, of any immunity from suit legal process or of any privilege, exemption or other immunity enjoyed, or which may be enjoyed, by the High Commissioner.

7.04 The UNHCR reserves the right to suspend its participation in the safe passage if either of the other Parties to this agreement demonstrate by their actions, or lack of action their reluctance to honour both the spirit and the letter of this agreement.

7.05 Any of the Parties to this agreement may withdraw from the Agreement, or request a modification to it, by notifying the other Parties in writing, at least 10 days in advance.

7.06 This agreement is valid for an initial period of one year. In the absence of any indication to the contrary from any of the three Parties, it will be extended beyond this intitial period by one year at a time.

On behalf of Government of Sri Lanka

On behalf of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

On behalf of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

★ Whither Eros

Since being disarmed by the Tigers in 1990, one of the oldest Tamil militant groups, EROS (Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students) has split into several factions. Its leader Balakumar first reported to have been under house arrest in Jaffna, later agreed to work with the LTTE and was allocated the non-political task of looking after relief and rehabilitation. There have been other defections from EROS both at leadership and rank and file level. What is now left of EROS is led by Shankar Rajee based in Colombo.

Recent reports indicate that Mr. Segu Dawood who entered parliament from the Batticaloa District as an EROS-Independent candidate is about to cross over to the ruling United National Party and may be appointed as a State Minister. It is said that Mr. Dawood had become disillusioned with the Tamil militant movements since the Muslims of the east were physically attacked and those in Jaffna were forcibly driven out.

Of late he has been supporting the government in the voting lobbies. Recently he voted with the government on the motion to extend the state of emergency.

★ Mrs. B's Final Solution

In a widely reported recent speech delivered at a public meeting in Gampaha, the leader of the opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike said: *'We cannot concede an inch of our motherland Lanka. Nor shall we permit anybody else to do so. Even India could not capture Prabhakaran. Neither this government nor any other wishes to end this war. If we are given the opportunity, the northern problem will be finally solved.'*

The recently published rehash programme of the SLFP did not provide any formula or lay down any policy for the solution of the ethnic problem or for ending the war. Neither did Mrs. Bandaranaike spell out in her speech how she would solve the problem if she came to power. A war-weary people may decide to vote her back to power after sixteen years if she spells out how she proposed to solve it. What is certain is that her jingoistic rhetoric about not conceding an inch of the motherland' will not help to solve the problem.

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THE SUB-CONTINENTAL SCENE

● Sri Lanka Agrees to Curb Attacks on Indian Fishermen

by T.N. Gopalan, Madras

The Sri Lankan armed forces could perhaps be faulted for making a mess of the Yazh Dev operations or of turning tail in the face of ferocious attacks from the LTTE In Janakapura. Even the Navy too could not cope with the assault of an LTTE suicide squad in the last week of August and lost its Israeli-build gunboat.

But when it comes to targeting the poor Tamil Nadu fishermen in the environs of Kacha Theevu, the Lankan Navy never falters. Time and again, a high-strung Naval patrol, apprehending a surprise attack from the Tigers, have gone on a shooting binge near Kacha Theevu.

Three such incidents in September ruffled tempers in Tamil Nadu and Chief Minister Jayalalitha, in her continuing war of nerves with the Centre, seized the opportunity to hit out at its inability to end the atrocities of the Lankan Navy on the Tamil Nadu fisheremen.

But nothing much happened. Four more fishermen had to be shot dead (on Oct. 8) for the notoriously indecisive Narasimha Rao to sit up and take notice.

The Indian High Commissioner in Colombo, Mr. Nareshwar Dayal, strongly protested to Foreign Secretary Bernard Tilakaratne and demanded an end to such 'indiscriminate firing on straying fishermen'. Now things started happening. Mr. Tilakaratne rushed to New Delhi for talks with his Indian counterpart J.N. Dixit. At the end of it all the former expressed his understanding of the Indian position, but also stressed that the Lankan naval authorities 'have always sought to avoid the use of force against Indian fishermen.'

The two sides conveniently glossed over the fact that the trouble this time started with the Lankan Navy's enforcing a no-go zone in its entire northern territorial waters in the aftermath of the gun-boat disaster.

When the Lankan Defence Ministry notified the no-go zone, without bothering to look into bilateral pacts and rights of safe passage, it took some time for India to realise that it too had a stake in the matter and tell the Lankan government that it had better revise the regulations and accommodate the rights and interests of Indian fishermen. Again the latter obliged, but apparently the implications of the revision did not reach the Navy – or, more probably, the navymen preferred to ignore the new guidelines.

But then it is not as if the firing – unnecessary, unprovoked and cruel – on the Indian fishermen started with the dramatic Israeli gun-boat episode. Ever since the Tamil militancy intensified in the North and East of Sri Lanka and therewith the militant traffic between the shores of the two countries, innocent Indian fishermen have been falling an easy prey to the trigger-happy Lankan Navy.

When it was discovered that the prawn variety had a huge export potential and the Indian fishermen, especially those from Rameswaram and to some extent from Thondi and Nagapattinam, invested heavily in motorboats and went prawn-hunting, Kacha Theevu was part of India. This is an important factor in that it is only in the muddy sea-bed around Kacha Theevu that the prawns are found aplenty.

Even when it was ceded to Sri Lanka in 1974, the right of the Indian fishermen to ply their trade around Kacha Theevu was guaranteed: 'Indian fishermen and pilgrims will enjoy access to visit Kacha Theevu as hitherto and will not be required to obtain travel documents... Vessels of India and Sri Lanka will enjoy in each other's waters such rights as they have traditionally enjoyed therein...'.

But the subsequent treaty of March 1976 changed all that: 'Each party shall have sovereign rights and exclusive jurisdiction over the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone as well as over their resources whether living or non-living, falling on its side of the boundary...'. None in Tamil Nadu understood the implications of the new clauses. Even if they had, nothing could have been done about it since Emergency was then in force.

Still they were balmy days for the Indian fishermen. When this writer visited Rameswaram in the wake of a series of attacks on the Indian fishermen in October 1984, they recounted that the Lankan naval personnel had once been very hospitable. 'Sir, they used to exchange their bread and other provisions for our fish, invite us over to their launches for a lavish treat and so on....But when militancy reared its head, they thought that every one of us was only running errands for the Tigers....We're here for a living, not for a revolution... But the navy does not seem to understand...', Mr. N.J. Bose, President of the Rameswaram Mechanised Boat Owners' Association, lamented. Still a leading functionary, Mr. Bose notes that raiding of the boats, looting of the catch, beating up and finally shooting of our fishermen have continued to this day.

'Pious platitudes don't work. Only stern warnings backed by support from the Indian Navy alone can alleviate our miseries,' he declares.

● Maharashtra's Hour of Darkness

'The equivalent of a H-bomb explosion,' is how a British geologist describes earthquakes. The devastation caused by the massive tremors which rocked the Latur and Osmanabad districts in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra on September 30 seems to prove that the Hydrogen bomb imagery is no exaggeration.

Measuring at 6 on the Richter scale, with their epicentre south of Umerga Taluk in Osmanabad district, at latitude 18 degrees 2 North and latitude 76 degrees East, the tremors in five spells, lasting in all just two minutes and 17 seconds, all taking place between 3.56am and 7.48am, left in their wake a horrendous trail of death and destruction.

According to Mr. Sharad Pawar, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, the total death toll in the earthquake was only 9,748 and not 30,000 as had been widely thought. He felt that some 16,000, very critically injured might have been taken to be dead. Any way they were all caught under the debris of their respective houses as the tremors occurred in the wee hours of the day. A population of 1.35 lakh persons was severely affected in 86 villages which suffered the most. Not a single house survived in 35 of those villages.

The tremors were also felt over the entire south India besides Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The maximum damage outside Maharashtra was reported from Bijapur district where several houses caved in killing at least seven persons and injuring more than 100 persons. Ironically the calamity took place right at the beginning of the United Nation's International Decade

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for Natural Disaster Reduction. To quote a journalist, 'The Uttarkashi quake (in Uttarpradesh in October 1992) was devastating enough, with a toll of close to a thousand. But the Latur calamity makes a mockery of not merely our disaster management systems, but also our relief disbursal mechanism. . .'.

For the 18,000 residents of Khillari town in Latur district who had experienced some 125 tremors between August 2 1992 and October 29 that year, the September 30 explosions were literally the last nail in their collective coffin. Life will never return to normal here. Khilari and villages around simply ceased to exist as human habitations.

This area lies in the home district of the Lok Sabha (the lower House of the Indian parliament) Speaker Shivraj Patil and also of Mr. Vilasrao Deshmukh, a senior minister in the Maharashtra state cabinet. Still the repeated pleas of the people of Khilari and adjoining villages to the authorities for relocation were all in vain.

But then the findings of the study of the Haridwar earthquake of November 1992 indicated that the Delhi-Haridwar region, specially the areas near Rohtak, Gurgaon and Sonepat were seismically active. Subsequent studies suggested that the entire Himalayan region and parts of the Deccan plateau were in the same category, with an 'active fault' running in Moradabad-Mathura region.

The September eruption perhaps indicates that a far more sprawling area, almost embracing the entire country is earthquake-prone, and this calls for a heightened sense of quake-preparedness. But then, according to an Indian expert, 'The current measuring instruments in India are not operated meticulously and three generations behind the sophisticated digital instruments used abroad. If only we had modernised the network, we would not be in this mess.' Not that even the most heightened sense of alertness could avert any natural disaster from taking place, but simply that the consequent human misery could be minimised as much as possible.

Informatively, Mr. S.N. Bhattacharya, a senior geologist, has opined that the earthquake was a result of the shifting of the Indian landmass towards the north and north-eastern region. Because of this movement, it is constantly colliding against a stationary Eurasian landmass.

The agony of the tremor-hit villagers of Umarga was further accentuated when their representative in the State Assembly, Abdul Khaliq Kazi died of a massive heart attack while on his way to his constituency.

Anyway subsequently even the soporofic government of India sprang into action, forming a crisis management group under the chairmanship of the Union Cabinet Secretary. The Defence Ministry moved troops from Secunderabad, Pune and Ahmednagar to the affected areas to assist in relief and rescue operations. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao released Rs.2 crores from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for providing emergency relief.

The army moved as many as 14 columns for rescue work. Specialised engineering equipment such as earthmoving plants, cranes and the like arrived on the scene within a few hours for extricating those trapped under the rubble.

The entire nation rose as one to help out the victims. Lakhs of rupees came pouring in for the relief work from all over the country. The international community was not lagging behind either. US President Bill Clinton's Special Envoy, Ray Flynn flew in to hand over relief material valued at around three million dollars. Many other countries followed suit.

The work on hand is indeed daunting. At least 35,000 new houses would have to be built to take care of the victims. The estimated cost of this work alone could work out to nearly Rs. 500 crores.

Incidentally even as debates are raging on the right type of design for a quake-resistant house, the impressive Naldurg Fort, barely 50 km away from the earthquake epicentre, has remained untouched by the tremors. According to experts such old buildings are able to survive because their walls are not long and straight, instead they have bulges in between which strengthen the walls. Also the walls of such forts are thick in relation to their height while those of the collapsed houses were narrower in relation to their height.

Over a lakh of lives have been lost in earthquakes during the last two centuries.

Though the toll is the highest in 50 years, the intensity of the September earthquake has been described as 'moderate' by Mr. N. Sen Roy, Director General of the Indian Meteorological Department.

According to him one of the highest intensity earthquakes was in Assam in 1950, which read 8.5 on the Richter Scale, but the loss of life then was minimal.

The last heavy loss of life in the sub-continent was in the tremors in Quetta (now in Pakistan) in which more than 30,000 persons perished and another one the previous year in Bihar claimed nearly 10,000 lives.

● Benazir Back in Power

Benazir Bhutto took power as Prime Minister of Pakistan on October 19 after three years in the political wilderness, pledging to do her best in her second opportunity to lead the Muslim country.

'I felt a great sense of satisfaction as I was taking my oath for the second time,' Bhutto said in an interview after she was sworn in by acting President Wasim Sajjad.

'I felt that God has given very few Prime Ministers in Pakistan this opportunity, and I hope I will be able to redeem the pledge the people of Pakistan have placed in me.'

Three years ago, Bhutto was dismissed on disputed charges of corruption and misrule.

She took the oath hours after the lower house of Parliament voted, 121 to 72, for the charismatic, 40-year-old mother of three, whose Pakistan People's Party emerged with the most National Assembly seats in the hung Parliament elected on October 6.

The first eight ministers in what she said would initially be a small cabinet of about 10 were also sworn in.

Dressed in a royal blue tunic and trousers, with her head covered by a white veil, Bhutto was watched by her young son and daugher, Bilawal and Bakhtawar, and by Pakistan's most powerful man, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Abdul Waheed.

Waheed forced the resignations of her predecessor, Nawaz Sharif, and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan last July to end their paralyzing power struggle. He said, 'I am glad democracy is on the rails. I thought it would be difficult, but it all turned out very well.'

The army has governed Pakistan for most of its 46 years since independence and remains the final arbiter of power.

Bhutto's position was buttressed when her nominee was elected Speak-

er of Parliament. He is from Punjab, the richest and most powerful province, once Sharif's power base.

She left after the ceremony on a lightning tour of the North West Frontier and Punjab to help those friendly to her to be elected to rule there. While She consolidated her position on October 20 by taking Punjab, she lost the NWFP to Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League.

'This is an epoch-making moment,' Bhutto said earlier in a speech to the National Assembly as PPP members thumped the benches and cheered.

It is only the second time in Pakistani history that a person has been elected twice as Prime Minister, she said, alluding to her late father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the nation's first popularly chosen leader.

In a division of the house, smaller parties, independents and allies filed out of one of the two side doors to lend their support to the PPP's 85 elected deputies, enabling Bhutto to defeat Sharif and form a coalition government.

Eight members abstained, including several fundamentalist Muslim clergymen who oppose leadership by a woman.

Sharif congratulated Bhutto on her 49-seat majority when the two passed each other on the floor of Parliament to take up their seats as house leader and opposition leader.

Analysts warned that the survival of her government would be dependent on the support of small parties, leaving her vulnerable to their demands and casting doubts on the PPP's ability to push through major new policies.

Bhutto pledged to start work at once to end Islamabad's international isolation after American threats earlier this year to place Pakistan on a list of countries sponsoring terrorism, to implement reforms and to end corruption.

'People are waiting for change. People don't want a mere change of face; they want a change of system' she said. 'My government will be a government of reforms.'

But in comments that analysts said could worsen American-Pakistani ties, Bhutto said on October 20 that her country would pursue its nuclear program. 'We will protect Pakistan's nuclear program and will not allow our national interest to be sacrificed,' she said in a recorded television address.

On October 19, two senior PPP leaders were sworn in, Farooq Ahmed Leghari becoming Foreign Minister. Six more ministers were sworn in on October 21, three of them from minority parties.

Bhutto kept the Finance and Commerce portfolios but appointed a former Bank of Pakistan governor, V.A. Jafery, as special adviser on finance with ministerial status and businessman Chaudhry Ahmed Mukhtar as Minister of State for Commerce. Naseerullah Babar, a retired general, was sworn in as Interior Minister.

She also allocated portfolios to three members of other parties in her coalition government. She gave Parliamentary Affairs to Sher Afghan Niazi, an independent, and Industries and Production to Mohmmad Asghar, a senior member of a PML splinter. Mohammad Afzal Khan, of a small party from NWFP, was also sworn in. His portfolio is to be announced later.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Niazi said Bhutto planned to present a bill to amend a martial law-era law that gives the President the controversial power to sack the Premier.

Presidential elections are to be held on November 13 in the first major test of strength for Bhutto.

(Reuters).

Reflections on Tamil Refugees in Switzerland

Disparagingly, Tamil asylum-seekers have come to refer to their lives in Switzerland as a 'Pungudutheevan Exile'. The comparison between the island of Pungudutheevu and the Alpine splendour of Switzerland is not a physical one. Well not in the obvious sense.

Sitting by a mountain lake framed by gentle meadows Rajendran searched hard for the words which best captured the experience of being a Tamil in Switzerland.

'We Tamils are very conscious of our status. Ambitious. Competitive. But most of all proud. A bird in the sky is doing what he does best. But when he comes to ground he is vulnerable. We Tamils need Jaffna: that is our sky. In London it is almost possible to be a Jaffna Tamil. Think of it this way. Our culture runs on railway tracks. Tracks that have been laid between Ceylon and London. The carriages and all their people with their luggage have been transported from here to there. To Switzerland there are no tracks and no luggage.'

No tracks and no luggage. No temples, no lagoon, no medical practices or professorships, no brides, no land, no family, no girls that dance. Like the bird on the ground Tamils in Switzerland feel vulnerable.

Pungudutheevu in both a physical and cultural sense is seen as an appropriate metaphor. Variously described as 'God forsaken', bleak and desolate', 'lonely and dispiriting' it is the place that everyone wishes to leave. The land is unwelcoming to all but the hardiest crops. An island linked only reluctantly to the Tamil heartlands.

And in sympathy with this physical setting the people of the island have been imbued, saturated with this spirit of desolation. As if in defence of the island they have barricaded themselves into a cultural laager. Ask a mainlander to describe a Pungudutheevan and unless he or she has married one I can bet my last dollar that the first adjective used will be 'selfish'.

The people of the island are not, it is constantly reiterated, like us. They are 'the other' to the Jaffna Tamil, their hearts are in their pockets, they would cut off their mother's finger to get the gold. For business – and that is what they are good at – they will sacrifice their childrens' education: no Tamil would do that. Doubts are cast on their claim to Vellala status. Some have suggested that they are Singhalese in disguise sent to colonise and sap the north of its resources.

The Tamil cultural train has bypassed Switzerland. Stripped of physical nourishment the essence of the Tamil spirit has withered. To other Europeans, Switzerland is thought of as crushingly dull. A land of bank clerks and housewives. Stable and safe. An exile but a 'Pungudutheevan Exile'.

Krishnakumar sat uncomfortably in a cheaply upholstered chair picking at loose threads. His refuge, a container built on waste ground surrounded by Swiss homes of bunker architecture, protected him against what he feared most, the indignity of being uncovered.

'No one knows who I am here. My wife came once. I could not tell her I was washing dishes. She did not ask . . . I don't think she wanted to know. She would never sleep by me again if she knew. My daughters will soon be married. No boy of any status would

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come near our family if they knew what I was forced to do'.

Individual isolation is the Tamil way of life in Switzerland. For Chandran the choice is a simple one.

'I work at different hours but when ever I finish I come back to my room and watch a video. I never go out. I only talk to those I know and those who know me. It is dangerous to let others know too much about you.'

Four Muslims sit around a newspaper advertising rooms for let. They are prepared to pay more to live in a safe area. Somewhere where they cannot be found, where other Tamils will not urinate through their letter box and throw alcohol against their windows.

The dangers faced are real and not imagined. Their nemeses are not demonic skinheads who find entertainment in firebombing asylum homes. But fear of personal failure and anxiety about a society in decay.

Walking into a room of strangers can be a frightening experience. A certain brashness and self confidence enables some people to walk up to one of those strangers, interrupt a conversation, and introduce themselves. But how do you interrupt a conversation when you do not understand the language? Tamils in Switzerland entered the room but for most timidity got the better, uninvited and unwelcome they turned and left.

But what is the alternative? There is no exile community. No temples only ersatz priests one minute chopping meat the next conducting unecessary expensive rituals in broken Sanskrit. Lonely Tamil boys fast-forwarding love scenes to find the fight and the car chase. And girls, padded against the cold, scribbling letters which barely conceal their desperation. Tiger 'Boys' touting watches and calendars demanding money not with menace but with dubious concern about those who have remained behind. In Zurich's mainline station two Albanians hold a frightened Tamil by the arms as his brother fatally plunges a knife into his side: a dowry dispute some say. An agent who has abandoned a group of Tamils in Moscow is decapitated in the shadow of a snowy peak.

It is like the word processor on which I am writing this article: you work, you save and you wait. A mechanical life interrupted only occasionally by bursts of hope. Plans to move on, a Christmas bonus, a meal with friends, a cricket match, dreams about return. And bursts of worry, a comment in the wrong ear, money missing from the till, a registered letter from the Swiss government.

But for the most part life is about money. This month is a good month I can send back a thousand Francs. But I cannot go another winter without a coat. These cheap Malaysian shoes trap the snow and my jacket soaks up the rain. But it is not the same for all Tamils in Switzerland.

For so long excluded from the mainstream and looked down upon as parvenues Pungudutheevans began fighting back. In 1984 sensing what was to come they looked back on their exposed island, then south towards Colombo and west towards Europe. A family strategy was devised in which Suresh, the farmer, remained on the island, Ganakumar the businessman who understood the Sinhalese held fort in Colombo and Rajan the adventurer accompanied by his wife and eldest daughter took off for Switzerland. The Pungudutheevan train rolled into Bern.

Pungudutheevans it is said create an island wherever they go. There are now many 'Pungudutheevus' in Switzerland. Unlike other Tamils who are only seen in Paris or alone Pungudutheevans travel as families. Applying for visas to visit England, negotiating deals with Sri Lankan importers, selling drugs on the streets, or ferrying hopeful asylum-seekers across the mountainous borders Pungudutheevans are very much at home.

It was Pungudutheevans who first held money raising parties – now everyone is doing it. It was Pungudutheevans who first employed Brahmins to officiate at spurious ceremonies – now everyone is doing it. It was Punagudutheevans who first brought over wives and children – now no one can do it.

It is ironic that people from this small island who were for so long excluded from polite society now define the parameters of Tamil social life in Switzerland. They are established and powerful. They protect a territory, sometimes with violence, which they claim as their own, 'because we were here first'. They are a threat to the militants because they represent independence. They have no truck with the 'struggle'. They are not frightened.

But what is of greater concern to mainland Tamils is that Pungudutheevans are now buying-up land in Jaffna. Of course it is not only Pungudutheevans. Migration and remittances have empowered all sorts of people to do what was previously thought impossible that is to buy much sought after land in the North.

One can be mislead into thinking that the emptiness of life for Tamils in Switzerland must inevitably result in stagnation. But that is not the case. The diaspora of Tamils and the exile communities created is quietly, at times almost imperceptibly, reordering what is at the very heart of Tamil society and culture. Nobody knows what the future will bring but one thing is sure the Jaffna that many left in the 1970s and early 1980s has gone for ever.

Chris McDowell,
University of Zurich,
July 1993.

★ Mistaken Identity

Opposition MP, Richard Pathirana, recently created a furore with an allegation that the Tigers had penetrated the security cordon of Sri Lanka's parliament. He startled MPs saying that Adele, wife of the LTTE's principal spokesman Mr. Anton Balasingham was seen in the parliament's public gallery, MPs library and restaurant, and asked how come such a dangerous woman was able to gain access, posing a grave security risk to Ministers and MPs.

On the following day, *The Island* carried the story with banner headline, 'Anton Balasingham's wife entering Parliament unnoticed: SECURITY THREAT TO MPs, OPPOSITION WHIP COMPLAINS'. The report said that Mr. Pathirana revealed that Adele Balasingham was seen in the public gallery when the debate on the emergency was taking place, she had entered the parliamentary complex without an identity card or signing the visitors register. Some parliamentarians had seen Mrs. Balasingham in the public gallery with the Tamil MP, Mr. K. Srinivasan. Mr. Pathirana was joined by some other MPs who demanded an investigaton into the alleged security lapse.

Was Mrs. Balasingham in parliament with a suicide bomb-kit ready to blow it up killing all those within it? If she had succeeded, it would have been a national tragedy! But the feared tragedy turned into farce when subsequent investigations revealed that, after all, it was not Mrs. Balasingham who was seen in parliament. The lady in question was Ms. Elizabeth Philipson, the representative of the London-based International Alert which is engaged in a conflict resolution exercise in the island. Ms. Philipson was on a fact-finding mission to promote peace in Sri Lanka.

CLASSIFIED ADS

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MATRIMONIAL

Catholic Tamil professional parents *are seeking brides for their two fair, handsome sons, one boy a doctor and the other graduating next year. Prospective girls have to be between the ages 18-24, very fair and beautiful. Good morals essential. Doctors, Business Management graduates or accountants under 24 are also welcome to apply. All correspondences will be treated confidentially. Please send reply with full details and recent photograph to Boxholder, P.O. Box 9403, New Market, Auckland, New Zealand.*

Jaffna Hindu father, *retired professional, seeks well qualified fair bride under thirty for son, British Citizen, mid thirties, professional holding high position. M 694 c/o Tamil Times.*

Hindu *seeks bride for brother, 31, in secure employment in London, AAT qualified. Send details, horoscope. M 695 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek kind, homely girl for son, 28, employed in Canada, permanent resident. M 696 c/o Tamil Times.*

Parents *seek qualified partner for Doctor daughter, 30. Tamil Catholic, lecturer at Colombo Medical Faculty. M 697 c/o Tamil Times.*

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

Ahilesan *son of Mr. & Mrs. K. Thanabalasingham of 5 Jeremy Drive, Dayton, New Jersey, USA and* **Subangi** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. S. Wijayanayagam of 90 Mossbrook Crescent, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada on 30.10.93 at Sri Venkateshwara Temple, New Jersey, U.S.A.*

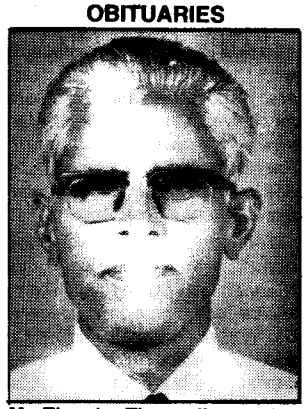
Gunan *son of Mr. & Mrs. S. Sabanathan of 'Brinthavan', Westerham Road, Keston, U.K. and* **Chitra** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kanagaratnam of 'Chitra Giri', Earlalai, Sri Lanka on 31.10.93 at Richard Challoner School Hall, Manor Drive North, New Malden, Surrey, U.K.*

Sudhager *son of Mr. & Mrs. S. Saravanapavan of 30 Haig Road, Colombo 4 and* **Sivananthi** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. K. Sivanantham of 51/4 Alexandra Road, Colombo 7 on 10.11.93 at 'Serendib Ball Room', Hotel Hilton International, Colombo.*

BIRTHDAY WISHES

Arthavan Manoharan and Birawi Manoharan *of 70 Wellington Avenue, Edmonton Green, London N9, celebrated their 2nd and 4th birthday on the 11th and 10th November 1993. Arthavan and Birawi have been blessed and wished by their Mummy and Daddy, Vasuki Aunty, Appamma, Ammamma, Thaththa, Uncles, Aunties and Cousins all from Sri Lanka, Mangalan Aunty and family from Germany, Kumar Uncle and family and Easan Uncle from Canada for their welfare and long life.*

OBITUARIES



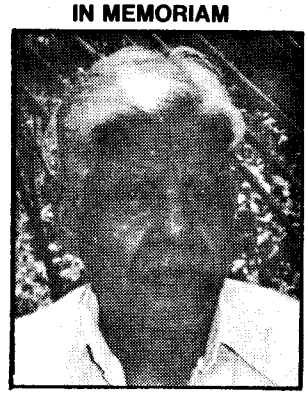
Mr. Thambo Tharmalingam *(75) retired Chief Electrical Engineer, Walkers Ltd., Colombo, and of the Ceylon Electrical Board; beloved husband of the late Thanalakshmi and Thavamani; loving father of Tharmaasokan, Tharmini (Australia), Thanushini (Jaffna University), Tharmavathanan (City University, London); father-in-law of Puveendran and Kumuthavalli (Australia); grand father of Tharshini, Arujunan and Vyshnuvi (Australia); step father of the late Rudrakumar, Premkumar (Colombo); brother of Jayadurai (Colombo) and late Rasam, Annam and Yogam passed away on the 6th of October 1993. Funeral took place in* **Kokuvil, East, Kokuvil** *on the 7th of October 1993. – 85 Beaty Street, Ivanhoe, Victoria 3079, Australia. Tel: (03) 497 4794.*

Mr. R. Sri Pathmanathan, *Consultant Oral Surgeon, Monklands District Hospital, Airdrie, Lanarkshire, husband of Sheila, father of Rohendra, Gehan, Chantal, and Ashita Waterston, brother of Mrs. T. Chelliah (Melbourne, Australia) passed away on 7th November 1993. Cremation at Golders Green Crematorium on Sunday 14th November 1993 at 12 noon. No flowers please, but donations to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund or the Cancer Research Fund – 46 Jackson Lane, Highgate, London N6 5SX (Tel: 081-348 1336).*

Dr. Kumarasamy Rajaratnam, *formerly Registered Medical Practitioner, Chunnakam and latterly of the DHSS London, beloved husband of Saraswathy; loving father of Rajakumar, Mohan, Murugan (USA) and Ranganathan (Duckles); father-in-law of Saro, Jo and Dharmini; grandfather of Tony, Kevin, Venu, Nimalan and Shalini passed away on 30th October 1993 and was cremated at the Lewisham Crematorium on 4th November 1993. – 60 Exeter Road, Welling, Kent DA16 3LA. Tel: 081-855 3553.*

Mr. M. Murugupillai *(70), of Palai-Maviddapuram, Retired Assessor, Income Department, and Auditor; formerly of Ramakrishna Road, Wellawatte; lately resident of Melbourne, Australia; dearly beloved husband of Rajarajeswari nee Paper Nadarajah; loving father of Kamala Jothi (Rugby, U.K.) and Sivakumar (Melbourne); dear father-in-law of Dr. N.W. Vijeyapalan (Rugby) and Priyakanthi (Melbourne); adored grandfather of Prabhani and Shivani (Rugby) Vignesh and Kapilan (Melbourne); brother-in-law of K. Nadarajah (Colombo) and Dr. Rajabalendran (Alice Springs, Australia); brother of the late Vairavapillai and Chelliah, Sellammah Kasiviswanathan and Sinnathurai (Retired Central Bank) both of Palai passed away in Rugby, whilst on holiday with the daughter, on 22nd September, and was cremated at Coventry on 27th September. The members of the family convey their very sincere thanks to all relatives and friends who assisted in the obsequies, attended the funeral, sent floral tributes and messages of sympathy. They regret their inability to thank them individually – 129 Brawnmore Road, Bilton, Rugby CV22 6JJ. Tel: 0788 817301.*

IN MEMORIAM



In loving memory of **Mr. Vyramuthu Tharmalingam** *of Urelu East, Chunnakam on the first anniversary of his passing away on 23.11.92.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Raninayagam; children Linganayagam (U.K.), Tharmathurai, Tharmachandran, Tharmakunalosana (Colombo), Tharmasekaram (Australia), Tharmakunapooshana (Badulla), Tharmajeyasooriar, Tharmakunavathana (Germany) and Tharmakunabhavan; sons-in-law Sinnathamby, Arulananthan, Shanmugarajah and Sivabalasundaram; daughters-in-law Vimaladevi, Mangaleswary, Sornalakshmi, Gnaneswary and Roginithevi; and sisters Mrs. Thangaratnam Thambithurai, Mrs. Saraswathy Kandiah, Mrs. Lakshmi Vinasithamby, and Mrs. Sellamuthu Kathirgamathamby. – V.T. Linganayagam, 88 Orchard Street, Kempston, Bedford MK42 7JJ. Tel: 0234 856612.

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IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of **Mrs. Annamah Rajasingam** *on the first anniversary of her passing away on 8th November 1992.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her children Dr. Kanagasingam, Kunasingam (both of U.K.), Poopalasingam (Brisbane, Australia), Jeyakumar (Norway) and Thanaluxmy (Sri Lanka); daughters-in-law Saras, Ranee, Gowri and Saro; grand children Gowri, Ranjini, Mano, Jeya, Jeyanthi, Nirmala, Bhavani, Shanthi, Kumar, Sugu, Ravi, Brahma, Jano, Vasanthi, Baskaran, Mala, Lala, Priya, Vathana, Kanchana, Yamuna and Usha. – 4 Southway, Raynes Park, London SW20 9JQ. Tel: 081-542 5803.

Richard Jeyarajasingam

Born: 20.11.28 Called to Glory 27.11.90

All too soon you suddenly passed
Beyond our present sight
You left us and the world we knew
Without your radiant light.
But we know that like a candle
Your lovely light will shine,
To brighten up another place
More perfect. . . .more divine.
And in the realm of Heaven
Where you dwell
Free from every harm and pain,
You live on for evermore
Where one day we shall meet again.

Fondly remembered by Ranie and Children.

In loving memory of **Mr. Kanagasabapathy Nagarajah** *on the fourth anniversary of his passing away on 8.11.90.*

Gently with love your memory is kept
Your affection and kindness we will never forget
You are always in our thoughts
And for ever in our hearts.

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his loving wife Nagula; children Chandran, Kala and Ruby; son-in-law Nicholas; daughter-in-law Yesmin and grandchildren Selina, Trisha and Jeevan. – 50 Sandy Lane South, Wallington, Surrey, U.K. Tel: 081-647 8384

In loving memory of **Mr. V.S.S.K. Brahmananda** *on the first anniversary of his passing on 4.10.92.*

'Merciful Lord, grant him eternal rest
and keep him under your care'

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his wife and daughter.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sruthi Laya Seva presents **Violin Maestro Lalgudi G. Jayaraman** *and* **Karaikudi R. Mani** *on* **21.11.93** *at 6.00pm at the Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14; on* **26.11.93** *at 8.00pm at Purcell Room, South Bank Centre, London SE1 and on* **27.11.93** *at 3.00pm at Stanley Hall, 12 South Norwood Hill, South Norwood, London SE25. Tickets & Information Tel: 081-470 4393/455 1520/552 2265 & 071-387 0980.*

December 3 *St. Francis Xavier's Feast.*

Dec. 4 *6.00pm London Tamil Centre's Xmas Party at Wembley High School Hall, East Lane, Middx.*

Dec. 8 *Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

Dec. 9 *Eekathasi.*

Dec 9 *6.00pm Lecture on 'Left Party Political Ideologies – Origins, Evaluations & Their Relevance' at School of Oriental & African Studies. Tel: 071-278 3990 (S. Wijesinghe).*

Dec. 11 *Pirathosam. 7.00pm S.C.O.T. presents Xmas Dinner & Dance at Acton Town Hall, Uxbridge Road, London W3. Tel: 0895 257788, 0734 429467 & 081 904 6472.*

Dec. 13 *Amavasai.*

Dec. 17 *Sathurthi.*

Dec. 20 *Thiruvembavai starts.*

Dec. 24 *Eekathasi.*

Dec. 26 *Pirathosam.*

Dec. 28 *Full Moon.*

Dec. 29 *Thiruvembavai ends.*

Nagulan Selected Young Leader

Nagulan, *son of Lanka and Malathi Nersiah of Oman has been selected to attend* **The National Young Leaders Conference** *in Washington D.C. from November 16 to 21, 1993. This conference is a unique leadership development programme for outstanding high school students who have demonstrated leadership potential and scholastic merit. Nagulan a senior at Marshall Secondary School, Pasadena, USA will be among 350 students attending the conference from across America.*

The conference provides the opportunity for students like Nagulan to distinguish themselves as tomorrow's leaders. Students not only gain knowledge and experience in the nation's capital, they leave with a sense of accomplishment and an increasing ability to face the changes of the future.

Versatile Nagulan had his Muruthangam arangetram on 25.7.93 before a large and appreciative audience in Oman.

Yoga Swami Centre in London

Some devotees of Yoga Swami of Jaffna met in East Ham in London on 12.9.93 to discuss the idea of establishing a centre in London to propagate Yoga Swami's teachings and philosophy. The meeting decided to establish such a centre and name it 'Siva Thondar Nilayam' (Yoga Swami Centre).

This proposal received the blessings of Satguru Sivaya Subramuniya Swami of Hawaii (Yoga Swami's disciple, living Successor and Head of the Saiva Sidthantha Church), when he visited London in June this year. Vidwan K.N. Velan was elected patron and Mr. M. Arumugam, the Convenor.

The devotees decided to hold monthly prayer meetings on the Sunday following the Natchaththiram Aiyillium with Natchinthanai Bajans. The first Bajan was held at the Wimbledon Ganapathy Temple on 19.9.93.

Those interested are requested to contact the Convenor. Mr. M. Arumugam, 180 Shrewsbury Road, London E7 8QJ. Tel: 081-471 2348.

Subothini's Debut in Singapore

The Bharatha Natyam arangetram of Subothini Wendy Sinnathamby, a final year medical student at Guy's Hospital London, took place at the Singapore Labour foundation auditorium on the 9th of October, amidst an impressive gathering of invitees. The curtain raised with the song of Ganesh followed by a beautifully poised Pushpanjali. Then, it was a three hour stint of a tantalizing performance, with short breaks, that depicted ten different superb aspects of the various art forms of this great oriental culture, culminating in a 'Thillana' which Subothini performed as a professional though it was her debut.

Picture below shows Subothini paying obeisance to her guru Girija, prior to her Arangetram.

Subothini entered the field of Bharatha Natyam at a very tender age in Singapore, under the guidance of Mrs. Shantha Bhasker of the Singapore dance academy. Her last three years no doubt has given her the greatest uplift and reward in this art, having been tutored by Girija Varothayasingham an exponent of Vazhavoor

tradition and herself a performing artiste in London. Girija accompanied her pupil to Singapore to do the choreography and Nattavangam.

Professor R. Kanagasuntheram of the National University of Singapore and formerly Professor of Anatomy of the Colombo Medical Faculty was the guest of honour.

Subothini is the only daughter of Mr. and Dr.(Mrs.) T.J. Sinnathamby of Singapore and a grand daughter of late Dr. K. and Mrs. P. Cathiravelu of 'Sri Rama Manthiram', Manipay, Sri Lanka.

A Carnatic Recital of Enjoyment

An enjoyable evening was had by all who attended the Music Recital by Sangeetha Vani Smt. Nageswary Brahmananda arranged at Conway Hall on 11th July by the London Meikandaar aadheenam.

Smt. Brahmananda has a distinguished musical heritage inherited from her illustrious Gurus like D.K. Pattammal, Dr. Ramanathan, and Maharajapuram Santhanam. Her repertoire of songs for the evening were chosen with care and gave us dazzling examples of famous Tamil composers like Gopalakrishna Bharatha, Papanasam Sivan, Arunasala Kavirayar and Uthukkadu Venketa Suppaiyyar. Her rendering of Kaa Vava in Varali was particularly touching.

The Raga exposition in Bhairari and the lyric 'Yaro ivar yaro' brought to mind the mellifluous rendering of the song by M.S. Subhalakshmi. In the second half of the evening's recital, she ably presented a Ragam, Thanam Pallavi in Kamboji. The lyric 'Aadathu asamgatha va' in madhyamavati by Uthukkadu Suppaiyyar brought before our eyes the little dancing figure of 'Kannan'.

Brahmananda was accompanied on the violin by Sri Chandrasekharan who while able to give fitting repartee to her Swara Prastharas, embellished her singing with the right nuances and flourishes. His own raga alapana renderings were delightful to listen to. Sri K.S. Bhavani Sankar with a unique flexibility of styles accompanied Smt. Brahmananda on the mridangam with subtlety and anticipation thereby enhancing the rhythmic patterns set by the singer, Sri R.N. Prakash who played the Ghatam displayed great tonal versatility and Rhythmic varieties. In the thani aavartana by mridangist and ghatam both players showed great virtuosity and camaraderie.

The evening was memorable not only for individual excellences but for the pleasing harmony of performance achieved by the artistes in unison.

The evening was brought to a fitting close by an appreciative speech by Sri P.P. Kanthan where he highlighted the gems of the evening's repertoire. The title of Tamil Isai Mani was conferred on Smt. Brahmananda by the head of The Meikandaar aadheenam, which the audience felt was most appropriate.

Narayani Chatterjee,
Orpington, Kent.

Thenuha's Arangetram

Thenuha Thiagarajan ascended the stage at the Logan Hall, University of London on 11 September 1993 and gave a confident and polished debut performance in Bharatha natyam under the guidance of her guru, Smt. Selvaluxmy Ramakrishnan. The cultural calendar of recent months has been crammed with debut performances by numerous young artistes and Thenuha earned herself a place in the forefront of this array of talent.

Smt. Selvaluxmy had choreographed a varied and interesting repertoire of items, entirely in Tamil, and the young dancer rose to the occasion demonstrating fluent footwork and creditable bhava. Selvaluxmy's nattuvangam was accompanied by the melodious singing of R. Viswesswaran and the excellent orchestra: Bhavani Shankar on the mirudangam, B.K. Chandrashekar on the violin, Thayaparan on the flute and Kalpana Srinivas on the thambura.

The evening was highlighted by poignant and spontaneous display of guru bakthi. Smt. Balasundari Prathalingam, Selavluxmi's own much respected guru, graced the occasion as the chief guest. In her address, Smt. Balasundari advised Thenuha, having achieved the arangetram standard, not to place the art 'on the shelf' but to respect, develop and cherish it in the years to come. Such wise words – take heed Thenuha!

POEMS BY SIVARAMANI – 1989

UNTITLED – DREAMS?

I have no words
that give hope
and solutions
like a leaflet
in bold print.

Dreams
their meaning
is lost to me
who is uncertain
that the sun will rise
tomorrow.

While a gun
aims at society's
umbilical cord,
the dreams
of a butterfly
resting delicately
on the tip
of a fragile flower
are merely
an occurrence.

In my attempts
to be humane
I would rather leave
the flowers
on the trees.

Now,
the beautiful night
shaped by the day
is only a dream.

UNTITLED – THE LAST INTELLIGENCE

The last
intelligence is dying. . .

All avenues
for questions
denied
Children lie
only in darkness.
Nothing beyond
but
an orthodox
culture
preserved by
the draping
of a sari
The answers
to the questions
are already written.
Those to be named heroes
Already decided.

The intelligentsia
of the land
stand
on street corners.

Questions
answers and solutions
have lost their importance.
'We have failed to live humanely.'
This is our final
declaration/testimony/proclamation.

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